

Grosse Isle

# THE CONDOR

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Number 2



COOPER ORNITHOLOGICAL CLUB

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# Handbook of Birds OF THE Western United States

By FLORENCE MERRIAM BAILEY

With thirty-three full-page plates by Louis Agassiz  
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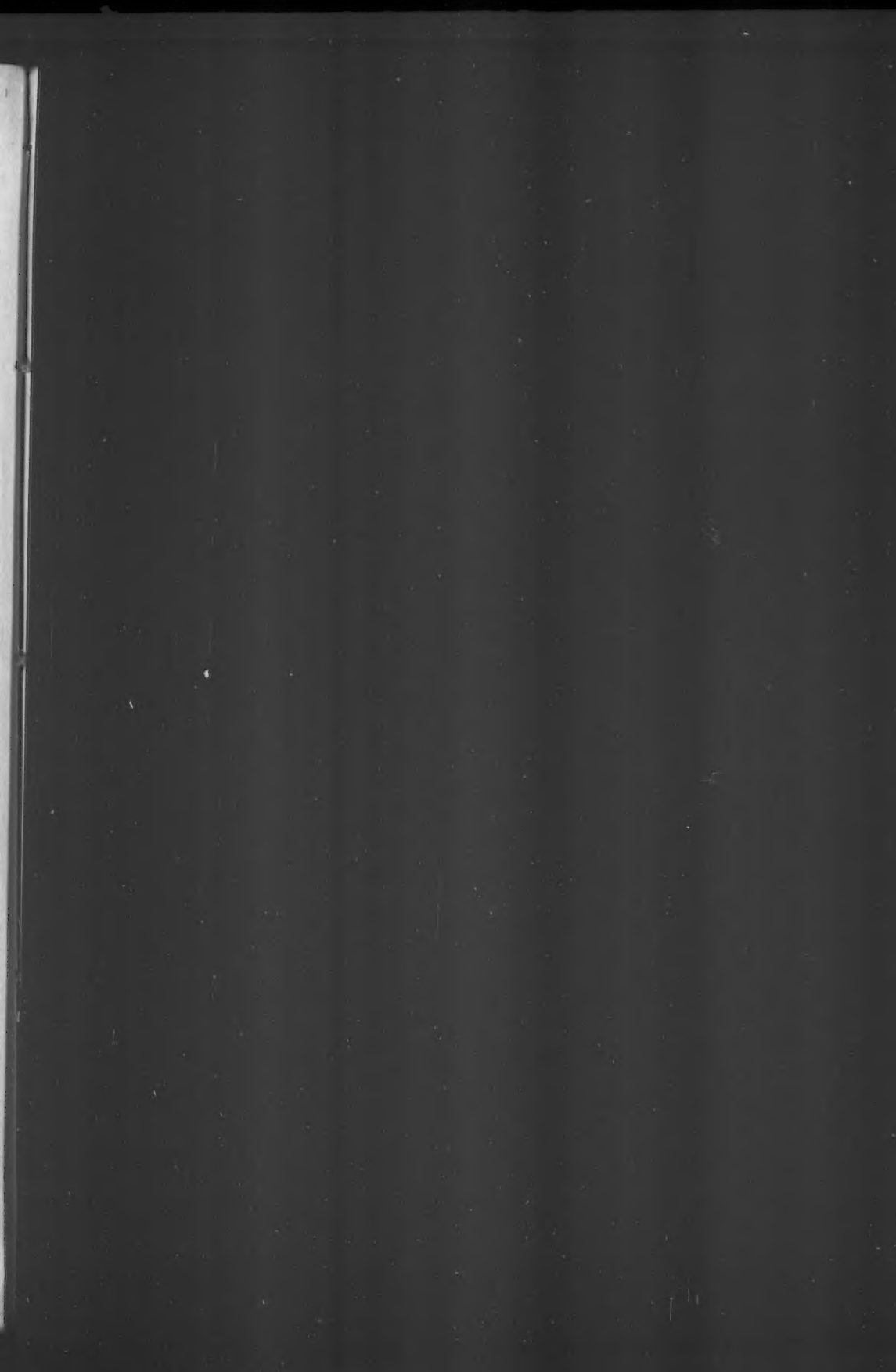
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# THE CONDOR A MAGAZINE OF WESTERN ORNITHOLOGY.



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## HISTORY OF A PAIR OF PACIFIC HORNED OWLS

By J. B. DIXON

WITH EIGHT PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

TOWARD the east end of the Escondido Valley, San Diego County, California, there arises from the valley floor a steep and rocky ridge. On the eastern slope of this ridge and in the big trees of the creek bottom directly beneath, two Pacific Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus pacificus*) have made their home for years. This pair of birds was selected for observation because they were close to my home, and their surroundings were typical for this bird in our section.

To the east and south of this location the Escondido valley stretches away, covered with orchards, vineyards, and fields of alfalfa and grain. Two creek bottoms cross this part of the valley, and there are a few small ponds scattered throughout during the spring of the year. To the north and west are rolling, brush-covered hills, with an occasional inland valley of small acreage. The edges of the small valleys and clearings are thickly populated with the smaller mammals which make up the principal diet of the Horned Owl.

Records of nesting dates for this pair of birds are available for the past thirteen years. During this time, to my knowledge, there have been killed in this immediate vicinity four adult Horned Owls, but apparently the remaining bird had very little trouble in securing a mate, as the site has never missed being occupied for a single season.

Glancing over the records we find that this pair has nested in old hawk's nests in trees three times, in an old hawk's or raven's nest in a cliff, twice, and in every other instance has made its home on some rocky ledge on this steep hillside. The variations in nesting dates have been very slight, considering the great variation in the weather of the different seasons during this series of years. The earliest date recorded for a complete set of eggs was January 29 (1911), with two eggs; the latest date was February 14 (1907), when a set of three

eggs, barely commenced in incubation, was taken. In two instances a period of four days elapsed between the laying of the first and the second egg, incubation starting with the deposit of the first egg. In five instances three eggs, and in every other case two, were a complete set. This pair of birds would invariably deposit a second set, and even a third, within twenty-one days from the time the first set was disturbed. During the wet seasons of 1907, 1908 and 1909 three eggs were laid, possibly indicating that the birds were finding food more plentiful than formerly.

For the past several years I have been observing these birds, hoping that some time they would select a site where closer observation of their nesting habits would be possible. For the season of 1912 they chose a site which was on a cliff-face overlooking a deep and narrow canyon. From the opposite wall of this canyon the sitting bird could be observed, but was too far away for photographic purposes. In this nest two lusty youngsters were reared. For some

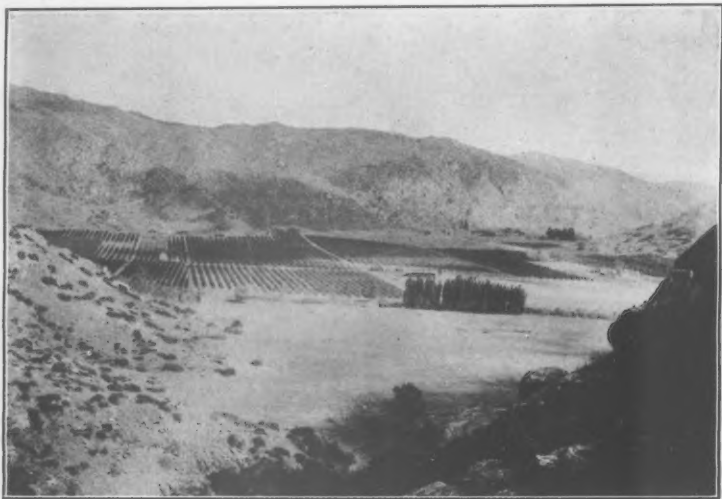


Fig. 17. VIEW FROM NESTING SITE OF PACIFIC HORNED OWL NEAR ESCONDIDO, CALIFORNIA

reason, best known to themselves, the birds left this site at the beginning of the present season, and set up housekeeping about three hundred feet below, in the same canyon, in the most accessible place they had yet used. Here, on the 2nd of February, we located the nest by flushing the bird, after two hours of hither-to fruitless search for her.

She had selected a ledge in a large rock pile overlooking the canyon and valley below. The two eggs the nest contained appeared to be fresh. This nest was visited at intervals of once a week for the next four weeks, and in every instance one bird flushed from the nest just as I was climbing up over the big rock adjacent, its mate leaving its perch in a small oak tree farther down the hillside when I was yet some distance away. The bird leaving the nest would alight on some nearby rock, and ruffling up its feathers, let out a cat-call or two, but seemed little disturbed by my intrusion, and would immediately resume incuba-

tion if I withdrew a short distance. When nearing the nesting site upon the morning of the second of March, just four weeks after the nest was located, the bird usually perched in the oak was nowhere to be seen, but upon stealthily



Fig. 18: PACIFIC HORNED OWL ON NEST; FIRST POSITION, FACING OUTWARD

creeping to the crest of the large rock across from the nest, and raising my head just enough to see over, I found myself gazing into the moon-like eyes of one of



Fig. 19. PACIFIC HORNED OWL ON NEST; SECOND POSITION, TURNED AROUND AND LOOKING OUT OVER HER BACK

the old birds. Beyond a slight ruffling of the feathers over the whole body and especially those of the throat, she paid no attention to me. This being the first time I had succeeded in getting so close, I immediately secured two exposures



Fig. 20. EGGS AND NEST OF PACIFIC HORNED OWL, SHOWING NATURE OF NESTING SITE

and crept away leaving madam in complete possession. The better of the two negatives is shown in the picture of the sitting bird facing you (fig. 18).

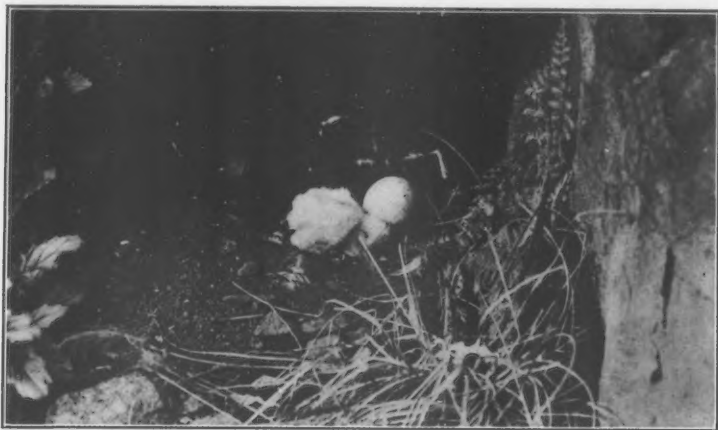


Fig. 21. PACIFIC HORNED OWL'S NEST; EGG AND NEWLY HATCHED YOUNG;  
BODY OF POCKET RAT IN BACK-GROUND

Hoping to secure something better I returned again after dinner and upon making a cautious ascent of the rockpile, found madam as approachable as ever; she now disdained to honor me with a front view. She had turned completely



Fig. 22. YOUNG PACIFIC HORNED OWLS ONE WEEK OLD; PORTION OF  
WOOD RAT IN BACK-GROUND

around and was now looking over her back at me, demonstrating that she certainly was in possession of a rubber neck! Using the single combination of my

Turner-Reich lens of eighteen-inch focus, stopping down to 64 U. S., and giving an exposure of ten seconds on a Seed number 30 plate, I secured a negative of her in this position which is the best one of all. Some idea of the value of a good convertible lens in this work may be secured by comparing the picture of the sitting bird with that of the nest and surrounding rocks (fig. 20), both taken from the same spot. The double combination of the lens of six and one-half inch focus was used in the latter picture. A slight movement of the focusing cloth after this exposure was too much for the nerves of the bird, and she was off like a flash, but so quietly as to be unheard even at the short distance I was from the nest.

Both birds put in an appearance after the one left the nest, but beyond cat-



Fig. 23. PACIFIC HORNED OWLS THREE WEEKS OLD; PORTION OF RABBIT IN FOREGROUND

calling and "who-who"-ing around, made no disturbance. The mate of the sitting bird flew out from a small sumac bush on the steep hillside directly above. I had always supposed there was considerable difference in appearance between the male and the female birds, but I could not tell one from the other except for one having an unusually white feather in its "horn". This feather shows up very plainly in the picture of the sitting bird. One was much wilder than the other and could not be approached very closely, indicating that they took turn about in the incubation of the eggs.

The cause of the extreme bravery of the sitting bird was at once apparent upon looking into the nest. One owlet was out of the shell and the remaining egg was pipped. This is conclusive evidence that the period of incubation is



over twenty-eight days for this bird, as the nest, when found exactly four weeks previously, had a complete set of eggs in it. I left the nest at once upon finding out what was in it, as I was afraid the owlets would chill, it being a wet and cloudy day. The little owl just out of the shell kept up a lusty cheeping, and when I withdrew a short distance, the old owl returned to the nest without delay.

On the 5th of March I again visited the nest and found both owlets out of the shell, and both set up a vigorous cheeping upon the old bird's leaving. I wished to secure another negative of the old bird upon the nest, so set up my camera and sat down to wait. The only thing that marred the stillness of the afternoon was the incessant cheeping of the owlets. I had been sitting with my back toward the nest, looking off down into the valley, when all of a sudden the cheeping of the owlets ceased, and upon looking around I found that the old bird had returned so noiselessly that I had not heard her, although I had been intently listening. She proved too wary for further exposures, but after leaving



Fig. 24. PACIFIC HORNED OWLS FIVE WEEKS OLD

the nest would always return, floating down from the steep hillside above like a small boy's kite, both wings extended, and would light on the nest-ledge as noiselessly as a bit of thistle down. The way she could travel through the air so noiselessly was absolutely uncanny. Upon settling on her young she made a short hissing noise, not unlike that of a goose but more subdued, and the youngsters would immediately cease their complaint. Three or four times she did this and I at first thought it was directed at me, but finally concluded that it was directed at the youngsters, as they then always became quiet.

As the owlets grew older the parent birds became wilder, never again allowing the intimacy shown during the hatching period. The young owls developed rather slowly until they were three weeks old, but from then on made a marvelous growth. Photographs of the young birds at their different ages give a better idea of the growth than mere words. Seven weeks from the time of hatching the two young owls left their nest for good, taking up their abode in

the brush and rocks of the steep hillside. They were still unable to fly more than a short distance, but were safe from further handling on account of their large, sharp claws, and their ability to fly and scramble over the rough surface faster than one could easily follow.

This pair of birds did considerable flying about and hunting on cloudy days. Their hearing was extremely good and their sight in the daytime was much better than I expected. An accurate account of food found in the nest at the time of the various visits gives us the following: parts of two brush rabbits, three wood rats, and five pocket rats. On only one occasion was there any indication of these owls feeding upon other birds, that being a small bunch of quail feathers at the base of the cliff, and I am sure that birds form but a very small percentage of their food. Otherwise we would undoubtedly have found some evidence in the line of feathers in or around the nest.

From all my observations of this pair of birds, extending over a long series of years, I would say that they were far more a benefit to the farmer and orchardist than a menace, in spite of the unfavorable reputation this species generally bears.

*Escondido, California, December 26, 1913.*

## DESTRUCTION OF BIRDS IN CALIFORNIA BY FUMIGATION OF TREES

By A. BRAZIER HOWELL

FEW people realize, I imagine, to what a great extent certain passerine birds are destroyed by the fumigation of citrus trees in California. Probably more birds of this group are killed each year in the state by this, than by any other agency of human operation. From time to time articles have appeared registering a protest against the use of poisons in sprays because a few birds have been killed by eating the fruit or insects with which the poison has come in contact, but no one seems to have pointed in print to the destruction caused by fumigation practice.

For those not familiar with the sight, it is necessary to explain that in order to kill the black scale, the greatest and most widespread citrus pest that we have, the trees are treated with hydrocyanic acid gas. As a covering to confine the gas the sheet tent is the type most often used. To one end of a long light pole is permanently tied a rope, and here is affixed a corner of the tent. Two men working in unison and each with such a pole, brace the free end with their feet and pulling hard on the rope, hoist the tent sailing over the tree in but a few seconds, hardly touching it during the process. Beneath the tent is then placed a jug containing a mixture of water, sulphuric acid and potassium cyanide, and by this is generated the deadly gas. The whole outfit is allowed to remain in position for forty or fifty minutes. This is done only between sunset and sunrise because if attempted in the daytime, certain burning of the fruit and foliage would result. Fumigation is carried on from August until January. As the tree is not disturbed in any way until the tent falls in place, any bird roosting therein is sure to be killed.

The exact location of a grove has much to do with the numbers of birds



that habitually resort to it at night, for one that is surrounded by other groves or plowed ground would not prove as attractive as one that is bordered by patches of weeds or brush. Also the bird mortality on a certain tract would vary greatly according to the time of the year when fumigation is undertaken. If during August, no dead Dwarf Hermit Thrushes, Gambel Sparrows nor Audubon Warblers would be found. Later in the season flocks of House Finches seem to frequent the groves more during the night, than in the early fall.

Conditions were observed only in my own and nearby groves, so my generalities applying to supposedly similar conditions farther afield must not be taken for absolute proof. In this case, however, what holds good in one district must apply to a greater or less extent to all the citrus centers of the state.

At my orange grove in Covina, fumigating was begun November 25, 1911, and most of the trees were treated, taking, in all, four nights. During the first night two hundred large trees were finished, and the next morning I counted under them the following dead birds:

- 37 House Finches (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*)
- 24 Goldfinches (*Astragalinus tristis salicamans* and *A. psaltria hesperophilus*)
- 11 Audubon Warblers (*Dendroica auduboni auduboni*)
- 7 Gambel Sparrows (*Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli*)
- 4 San Diego Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia cooperi*)
- 4 Western Chipping Sparrows (*Spizella passerina arizonae*)
- 3 Hermit Thrushes (*Hylocichla guttata nanus*)
- 1 Western Mourning Dove (*Zenaidura macroura marginella*)
- 1 Anthony Towhee (*Pipilo crissalis senicula*)

This was the only time that I made a careful and accurate count (though I may have missed several), but there seemed to be slightly more birds than on any other day that observations were made. Also my grove would probably give a greater count than the average, as on two sides it adjoins weedy land which proves a rather attractive feeding ground to the birds. Subsequent to the above date I have found, besides the forms already enumerated, a few Western Mockingbirds (*Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*), California Thrashers (*Toxostoma redivivum redivivum*), a Dusky Warbler (*Vermivora celata sordida*), and a partly decomposed hummingbird of some kind. Groves in other districts, as in the foothills or along the rivers, must have additional species roosting in them. A citrus tree and especially the orange, having rather dense foliage, presents a snug retreat, and it seems safe to say that practically all species would be found in them that habitually roost in the low trees of the districts in which the groves occur. From my own experience I am led to believe that Valley Quail (*Lophortyx californica vallicola*), although they commonly pass the night in the groves, do not suffer to any extent by fumigation, for they take alarm very easily and are driven out of the trees at any hour by any suspicious activity near-by.

Under two hundred trees I found ninety-two dead birds and there are 200,000 acres of bearing citrus groves in the state, planted with over eighty trees to the acre. These 1,600,000 trees are fumigated on an average every two years, which would give a total of 360,000 dead birds each year. As noted above, I believe this estimate to be slightly in excess of the real number, but even if we take but a third of this amount we must consider that it takes place on an aggregate of one hundred and fifty-three square miles. This is a large mortality for so small an area every two years, or only half the area each year.

Is there a remedy? The laborers employed by the fumigating companies are notoriously careless of the property on which they are working and I judge that very few of them would lift a hand in order to save the life of a bird. It

would be a decided help if we could have a law that would impose a slight fine on the fumigator for every bird so killed,—merely a nominal sum, say five cents a bird. This would be sufficient to make the workmen swing a lantern in among the foliage and shake the tree gently in order to scare out the feathered lodgers. In order to obtain results, it would of course be necessary for a warden to make occasional and unexpected visits to the orange groves during the fall of the year.

*Covina, California, January 17, 1914.*

## AN ASIONINE RUSE

By WILLIAM LEON DAWSON

IN her excellent article, "With Asio in the Greenwood", in a recent number of *Bird-Lore*, Florence Merriam Bailey describes the behavior of a Long-eared Owl which she had been watching closely for some time in the vicinity of its nest. The old Owl stood guard so quietly one afternoon that she seemed on the point of going to sleep. "The next moment", Mrs. Bailey records, "to my great astonishment, she darted to the ground as swiftly as a Kingfisher dives for a fish he has been carefully locating from above. A shriek—and then a silence! Up she flew surrounded by a noisy mob of Bronzed Grackles, three Orioles and a Blue Jay. When the excitement had subsided a little the Blue Jay flew off with a sad reflective cry", due to the proximity of her own brood. "And yet", concludes Mrs. Bailey, "the victim was probably a wood mouse, or some such small vermin".

This episode reminds the writer of an experience enjoyed by him while in camp on the banks of the Walla Walla River in Washington—May 3rd, 1907, it was—and a recital of the circumstances may possibly, although not certainly, throw some light on the identity of Mrs. Bailey's "mouse". I was seated at a height of twelve or fifteen feet from the ground in a willow tree beside a nest of young Long-eared Owls,—one of a line of four nests which I had been watching for several days. The youngsters were "freezing" faithfully, as usual, all except the runt, which still favored the cowering pose. The male parent had delivered himself of a series of quaint execrations, "*Morach moraaaouw, werek werek wereaow; werek wereaaw*", and had quitted the scene in disgust.

The female had caterwauled and cajoled and exploded and entreated by turns, all in vain. Matters seemed to have reached an *impasse*, and silence had fallen over the landscape. I had time to note the sage-pinks bright with morning dew, and the subtle, soothing gray-greens of the sage itself, as it rose in billows over the slopes of the closely-investing hills. All of a sudden the Owl left her perch, flew to some distance, and pounced upon the ground, where she could not well be seen through the intervening foliage. Upon the instant of the pounce arose the piercing cries of a creature in distress, and I, supposing that the bird, in anger, had fallen upon a harmless Flicker, which I knew dwelt in that neck of the woods, scrambled down instant and hurried forward. The prompt binoculars revealed neither Flicker nor mouse. There was nothing whatever in the Owl's talons. The victor and the victim were one and the same, and I was the dupe. Yet so completely was the *play* carried out that the bird fluttered her wings and trod vigorously with a rocking motion, as though sinking her talons deeply into a victim. I was astonished. Nor should I believe the evidence of my eyes to this day if I had not witnessed the same play repeatedly thereafter. The Owl

thought she had me going, and I humored her to the point of absolute personal satisfaction. There was never trace of fur or feathers or gore on the deserted stage. The distress cries, always convincing, were never overdone, but ceased, as they should, after the first onslaught; yet if I did not yield a prompt obedience to the lure, the Owl looked about reproachfully, and then redoubled her demonstrative wrestle with her alleged quarry. It was noteworthy in this connection that while other birds usually paid little heed to the notes of this Owl, however terrifying in volume or tone, this distress cry commanded instant attention throughout the woods. The small birds began to chatter sympathetically, while Crows and Magpies rallied as though at the blast of a bugle. In fact, some nimble Magpie, as often as not, interrupted the play before it was half finished. This was the clew, if clew were needed, to the explanation. Your humble servant was a big Magpie, who at the sound of conflict might be expected to rush forward and snatch the prize from the victor's grasp. Clever, wasn't it! And, parenthetically, your Magpie is evidently exactly up to that game, even if the stupid man failed to play to his lead.

The illusion of this decoy ruse (whose further psychology I leave who will to explicate) was most complete; and even inside knowledge of the facts could not lessen the wonder how this Owl could so perfectly reproduce the shrieks of former victims.

Possibly,—though the writer suggests this in all modesty, not knowing the full circumstances attendant upon the other episode,—possibly, Mrs. Bailey's Owl also carried her wood mouse in her throat.

*Santa Barbara, California, January 8, 1914.*

## SOME DISCOVERIES IN THE FOREST AT FYFFE

By MILTON S. RAY

WITH EIGHT PHOTOS BY THE AUTHOR

AS PLANS for a sea-island trip allowed but a very short and early visit to Sierran territory this year (1913), I selected Fyffe, at an elevation of 3700 feet in El Dorado County, in preference to points of higher altitudes. Fyffe has become rather famous, ornithologically, from the work of Barlow, Car-riger, Welch and others, and in fact in this respect it is one of the best known sections of the great Sierran chain. While the fact of the region having been so well worked rather suggested the advisability of going to less known localities, I relied on the chance that here, no doubt, as elsewhere in the Sierras, the bird-life would be found varying from year to year in both abundance and variety; and owing, too, to the fact that each worker afield possesses methods peculiarly his own, that one might still be able, perhaps, to add something new to the region's fund of accumulated bird-knowledge. Besides this, too, I was desirous of treading in reality those well worn paths of fellow workers, that I had already followed on printed page and in tantalizing photograph. My previous acquaintance with Fyffe was limited to glimpses of the region while passing en route to Lake Tahoe, and to a few hours afield on June 2, 1901. On this occasion, while about all I located was a nest with four eggs of the Western Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) fifty feet up in a lofty pine, nevertheless I gained an insight into the

possibilities of the region; for the few hours afield showed a wealth and variety of bird-life that few sections of the great woodland can equal.

If I lacked personal familiarity with the region and its bird-life, I was fully acquainted with the work that had been done by others. Besides Barlow's famous paper, "The Birds of the Placerville-Lake Tahoe Stage Road", I had carefully perused all other available bird literature on the region, and through the kindness of Mr. Henry W. Carriger I had also the opportunity of studying the daily field notes of Pemberton and Carriger covering a considerable period. A decided disappointment, however, was Carriger's parting injunction as I left San Francisco on May 12: "You're too early, Ray, I think, for nests of the Hermit Warbler. I wouldn't advise spending much time in search of them"; for I frankly admit the quest of avian rarities has always held for me a peculiar attraction.

It is a rather long trip to Placerville, and I had ample time to read and re-read Fyffe bird literature on the way. In glad surprise I stumbled upon this note on the Hermit Warbler, previously overlooked in Barlow's paper: "A nest containing young about four days old . . . at Fyffe on June 11, 1897", and I saw a chance existed, although rather remote, that after all I might still be in proper season to find a nest of that famous *rara avis* of Fyffian woodlands.

The train had now left the Sacramento Valley far to the west and by a tortuous route was toiling slowly through the winding canyons of the foothills. On gaining a sparsely wooded summit we were afforded a rare view of the distant and heavily timbered Sierran ranges, with Pyramid and other dazzling, snow-covered peaks towering in the back-ground.

Placerville was reached in the afternoon, but old friends luring me to a hammock swung in the shade of cherry trees, the bird-life out in the hot sun on the adjacent hillsides was left unmolested and unchronicled. Early next morning, however, bird-song and balmy air without, had me abroad at four o'clock, and before the stage left at 6:45 A. M. I had time to venture some distance out of the town itself, to cross a number of grassy fields, wet with dew, to ford a small stream and reach a group of scattered oaks, and later a thicket of pines on a steep hillside. Altogether, I noted fifteen different species; among them and exceeding all others in interest and rarity was a flock of ten Cedar Waxwings (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) in a line of thorny roadside trees.

While waiting for the stage I noted the old-time colony of Western Martins (*Progne subis hesperia*) circling about the eaves of the Cary House, or sweeping through the village streets melodiously twittering, just as I have seen them in numerous seasons before, just as Barlow, with graphic pen, describes them, and, perhaps, just as they did in the golden days of '49 when this little mountain town was the cynosure of all eyes.

By one day I had missed the through stage, which goes at this season as far as Echo, at the base of the main Sierran summit; but I was enabled by another line to go on to Camino from where, leaving my equipment to be forwarded, I walked on leisurely to Fyffe. Arriving at 10:15 A. M., I registered at that famous hostelry of Welch's "Sierran Echoes", Sportsman's Hall; and, as it was still some time until noon, I had opportunity before lunch to take a short walk in the immediate vicinity. A Western Lark Sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus strigatus*) flushed from her nest in an apple tree, and disclosing three scrawly-marked eggs, led off the season's tale, while near at hand was a newly built nest of the Western Chipping Sparrow (*Spizella socialis arizonae*), and one of the Western Robin (*Planesticus migratorius propinquus*) with three eggs. Homely finds, rather savoring of youthful experiences, yet still of value as indicative of

seasonal conditions. At a forest edge a Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) was noted drilling well up in a lofty dead tree trunk, while a Spurred Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus megalonyx*) fluttered off from an unfindable nest in a patch of mountain misery, that softest and greenest of all Sierran carpets.

It was not my original intention in the afternoon, in a sort of preliminary survey, to climb in traveling clothes the pitchy pines or charred dead tree trunks, but the ornithological temptations proved stronger than my resolutions. Edging on the road I noted four rich buffy eggs of the Mountain Partridge (*Oreortyx*



Fig. 25. IN THE FOREST AT FYFFE. THIS RATHER OPEN VIEW WAS POSSIBLE ONLY BECAUSE OF THE CLEARING ALONG THE DITCH; ELSEWHERE THE FOREST WAS GENERALLY SO DENSE AS TO PRECLUDE PHOTOGRAPHY. ON MAY 20 A NEST OF THE SIERRA JUNCO WAS LOCATED CLOSE TO THE LOG SPANNING THE STREAM.

*picta plumifera*) lying in a grass and leaf-lined hollow which a dead pine branch and surrounding weeds partially concealed. As I headed northeast into the great forest the rich melody of Thick-billed Sparrows (*Passerella iliaca megarhyncha*) came floating from the brush-covered clearings, while from all sides came a maze of warbler songs, incessant, varied and low.

I had now gone a number of miles, and had visited, though without result, several particular points mapped and described with great care by Carriger. The

nesting site of a Northern Pileated Woodpecker (*Ceophloeus pileatus abieticola*), in a lofty naked tree trunk, was found deserted; cobwebs covered the former nesting holes of White-headed Woodpeckers (*Xenopicus albolarvatus*) in a much-chopped dead tree; and the Townsend Solitaires (*Myadestes townsendi*) had wilfully departed from the region that Carriger had specifically assigned to them. Although bird-life was abundant, I soon learned that nests of any sort were difficult to find, owing to the density of the foliage. Even when located they were often next to impossible to reach, for here the pines, firs and cedars spear cloudward to such heights that one gazes up at them in wonder, like Gulliver in the gigantic woods of Broddingnag.

At various times could be heard the rare song of the Sierra Hermit Thrush (*Hylocichla guttata sequoiensis*) which, strangely enough, while previously unrecorded here, I found quite abundant. A Western Tanager was noted nest-building in a tall conifer, and both purple finches, Cassin and California (*Carpodacus cassinii* and *C. purpureus californicus*), were in evidence, and singing, I thought, distinctive songs. Some days later I noted the third member of the group (*C. mexicanus frontalis*), so this genus is well represented here. Of ground-loving birds the Spurred Towhee was by far the most common, with the Sierra Junco (*Junco hyemalis thurberi*) a poor second, for it is only in the higher altitudes that the latter is found in such great numbers.

While breaking my way through dense undergrowth, the wild cries of a pair of hawks as they swept through and above the timber attracted my attention. Their conspicuously white underparts proclaimed them American Ospreys (*Pandion carolinensis*), and while they seemed strangely out of place so far inland, I remembered that Barlow had previously recorded them from a point not far from here on the American River. I was now on the floor of a wide canyon to which the wooded mountains on both sides gradually sloped, while above, the leafy pavilions towered so close and high that only glimpses of the surrounding country could be had, with but small patches of sky above. On working up the south slope the Ospreys became still more wildly excited, but as they remained in the air continuously I was unable to learn the cause of their extreme displeasure. Several likely-looking, bulky affairs of sticks and twigs burdened lofty boughs above, but feeling unable to accomplish anything in Raptorian collecting here without equipment (or perhaps even with it!), and as it was, too, nearly dusk I was about to start back to the "Hall" when a small warbler, by its continued presence in the immediate vicinity arrested my attention.

The individual, which looked dangerously (and gloriously!) like a female Hermit Warbler, remained about twenty-five feet up, and although it flitted from bough to bough and branch to branch, it never wandered far away. To untrained eyes it would have appeared unconcerned, but to another than a novice its actions were decidedly suspicious, and called for narrow and patient watching. After a time, however, the bird disappeared, but a slow, laborious, and careful search revealed a small warbler-like nest woven to a slender, overhanging yew branch fourteen and a half feet up. On reaching a point above the nest I was able to see it held a complement of five eggs, but as my bird had not returned, and as it was almost dark, I decided to postpone further investigation until the next morning.

When I reached the locality early in the forenoon of the next day (May 14), the noisy pair of Ospreys were nowhere in sight. A sitting bird slid off as I approached the warbler nest, and lit on a branch close-by. To me it was an anxious moment, but my guess of the day before proved correct. The bird, a fe-



male, was none other than the rarest of all Sierran Mnioiltidae, the Hermit Warbler (*Dendroica occidentalis*), whose eggs remained so long undescribed, and whose recorded nests, even at the present time, can easily be counted on the fingers of two hands.

The nest was saddled halfway out on a slender yew branch fourteen and a half feet up. From the nature of the foliage the situation was somewhat open, but partial concealment was given by branches above and below. The tree itself was one of wide spreading branches, about thirty feet in height, and standing in the almost perpetual shade of the lofty firs and cedars, which in endless numbers cover the gradual slope of the canyon's southern wall. Dark and damp,



Fig. 26. THE MAZE OF FOLIAGE WHERE THE NEST OF THE HERMIT WARBLER WAS FOUND. THE NEST IS SITUATED IN THE CENTER OF THE PICTURE BUT IS TOO SMALL TO DISTINGUISH READILY.

with the ground littered with dead brush and decaying vegetation, the locality was hardly the place where one would expect to find the sun-loving Hermit Warbler nesting. Usually the bird frequents the edges of clearings with other feathered sun-worshippers; and Carriger informs me the nests recorded from Fyffe were in, or not far distant from, such localities.

The nest itself very closely resembles those recorded by Barlow, except that the inner lining, instead of projecting, is woven into the rim. It is round in shape, compactly built, and a little wider and more shallow than the nests of most other species of the genus *Dendroica*. It measures  $3\frac{1}{4}$  inches across over

all, by  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches deep, with a cavity  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter, by  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth. A rather pretty affair, made outwardly in part of brownish rootlets and a few pine needles, both of which strikingly contrast with the bleached bark strips and light-colored vegetable fibers which are also used. Strips of red cedar bark, horsehair, with here and there a scattered feather, form the lining. The five eggs, fortunately fresh, measure in inches: .66x.49, .67x.48, .67x.50, .67x.50, .69x.49. They are ovate in shape and have a very faintly tinged white ground color. The markings consist of well defined spots and blotches, which predominate around the larger end, where they form rough wreaths, and in color vary from mars brown to burnt umber, and, in a few places, even black. Equally as well distributed are the washy blotches of light violet-gray. This description is based on a comparison with the plates in "Color Standards and Color Nomenclature", by Robert Ridgway, 1912 edition.

While I remained in the vicinity the female flitted anxiously about, much as a Yellow Warbler would do; but although I waited patiently for hours, the male did not appear. It was almost noon before I completed my work at the nesting tree, and with notes, specimens and photos tramped triumphantly back to Fyffe, for although I had succeeded in locating a nest of the Hermit Warbler on my first day, it must not be thought I underestimated their extreme rarity. I may add that during my stay of ten days, in which I covered over one hundred miles afield, not only were no further nests located, but the birds themselves proved extremely scarce. Though countless scores of various other warblers were noted, but a very few birds that appeared referable to this species were seen, and these being well up in conifers, could not be positively identified.

In the afternoon, in the burnt district east of Fyffe, I noted a nest of the Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana occidentalis*) in a cavity of a pine stump ten and a half feet up. The nest was noteworthy in that it formed part of a nest of small black ants, which gained entrance through crevices below. The ever wandering hordes and countless numbers of their eggs were amid the material of the bluebird's nest. The latter, made of grasses and lined with bark strips, held three fresh eggs. On May 15 these were increased to four and on the 18th I noted five, slightly incubated. Nearby, a White-headed Woodpecker was flushed from a nesting hole seven feet up in a burnt stub, containing four badly incubated eggs. A week later the nest held three young and an infertile egg. Close to this nest was also one of the Cabanis Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus hyloscopus*), with four small young, fifteen feet up in a slender dead tree.

On taking a road that led in the direction of Webber Creek I came upon a large rattler stretched full-length across the road, with a mouse in its mouth. The reptile, which boasted eight rattles, quickly coiled and showed fight. Although it was promptly dispatched, the incident caused me for some little time afterward instinctively to tread very gingerly through the brush-covered rocky tracts. Later, along the main road half a mile west of the "Hall", the nest of a new breeding bird for Fyffe was found, that of a Sierra Hermit Thrush. This was openly placed three feet up in the crotch of a small dead tree, which afforded but scant concealment. The nest, of grasses, stems, leaves and bark strips, lined with fine rootlets and grasses, held a single fresh egg. Later visits showed as follows: May 15, two eggs; 16th, three eggs; 17th, four eggs; 18th, four eggs, with bird sitting closely.

For a second time at dusk a puzzling nest was located. This was at the very end of a pine bough, thirty feet up; from the nest a bird took wing and disappeared before I had opportunity to identify it. The nest I could see, from above,



held two eggs, and while I was unable to reach it I felt quite sure of being able to do so next day with proper equipment.

With a long rope swung from a bough above I succeeded in getting within a few feet of my unknown nest next morning (May 15), but closer proximity to the eggs, which now numbered three, was unnecessary. The owner lit close by and proved to be that most common bird of these altitudes, the Western Chipping Sparrow, which usually, however, nests in very low situations. Chester Barlow and other writers relate, too, how they have had similar and rather laughable experiences endeavoring to reach nests, almost inaccessible and of apparent rarity, which afterwards turned out to be of this exceedingly common species.

Most of the day was spent in Webber Canyon, where a number of Western



Fig. 27. NEST AND EGGS OF THE HERMIT WARBLER, THE RAREST OF THE SIERRAN WARBLERS. THIS NEST WAS SITUATED IN A YEW GROWING IN THE DENSE FOREST NORTH OF FYFFE. THE SET SHOWN IS THE FIRST TO BE FOUND CONTAINING FIVE EGGS.

Winter Wrens (*Nannus hiemalis pacificus*) were noted. Two Band-tailed Pigeons (*Columba fasciata*), flying high in an easterly direction, were also seen. Two nests of the Black-headed Grosbeak (*Zamelodia melanocephala capitalis*), a bird which is very abundant here, were also noted, one with three fresh eggs and one building. Along the south bank of Webber Creek, six and a half feet up in a small cedar that was half hidden amid a number of clumpy-foliaged pine saplings, I came across a nest of the Blue-fronted Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*). The sitting bird quietly slid off the nest, a bulky affair of coarse twigs, pine-needle lined, disclosing four eggs very slightly incubated. The parent showed the characteristic wariness of the species, for although I waited three-quarters of an hour, she did not return, nor did I hear the distinctive call-note within the nesting pre-

cincts. Seven feet up in a small pine nearby I found another nest of this jay, apparently one of the previous season.

Most of May 16 was spent in canyons north of Fyffe. Leaving the latter place, which by the way is not a hamlet but merely a hotel and postoffice, I came upon my first pair of Mountain Chickadees (*Penthestes gambeli*). Judging from the records of previous workers, these birds were unusually rare here the present season. Several times during the day I noted California Woodpeckers (*Melanerpes formicivorus bairdi*) as not uncommon, although Barlow does not record them for Fyffe. Two days before, I observed a pair of Red-breasted Sapsuckers (*Sphyrapicus varius ruber*) hollowing out a home in a lofty dead branch overhanging a ditch. Passing the spot now I found them still engaged in the work. While not rare anywhere I found Western Wood Pewees (*Myio-*



Fig. 28. NEST OF THE SIERRA HERMIT THRUSH, THE FIRST TO BE RECORDED FROM THE VICINITY OF FYFFE. NOTE THE LACK OF CONCEALMENT, A COMMON FEATURE OF THIS BIRD'S NESTING.

*chanes richardsoni richardsoni*) particularly abundant in a tract that forest fires had swept, leaving only charred tree trunks standing in dense undergrowth.

Though I saw in all about a dozen birds during my stay, it was here, near Blair's Old Mill, that I saw my first Northern Pileated Woodpecker at close range. Approaching the small stream that courses through the canyon, I heard a loud hammering in the distance, so loud that the whole ravine resounded with the echo, and which I took to be from men at work on some fence or bridge. As I neared the spot from which the sound came I was surprised to come upon two of these immense woodpeckers, of jet plumage and flaming crest, without doubt among the most remarkable and interesting of all Sierran aves. The two birds were to all appearances on a foraging expedition, and unseen I watched them for

a considerable time. After prospecting one dead tree they would alight at the foot of another and work upward. Flying thus from tree to tree, with a rather crow-like flight, they gradually disappeared from view down the canyon.

Nearing Fyffe, along the irrigation stream, a rather favorite haunt of bird-life, I found two nests. The first, one of the Sierra Junco, held four fairly well incubated eggs, and was made of rootlets, moss and grasses, and lined with wild animal hair. It was entirely concealed by the overhanging foliage of a small cedar and alder. The second nest, one of the Spurred Towhee, held four fresh eggs, and was completely concealed amid mountain misery and dead brakes. It was composed of bark strips, grasses, stems, leaves and brake, and lined with fine grasses.

Towards evening, in company with a friend who kindly volunteered to aid me in searching a wide patch of mountain misery for a nest of the Calaveras Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla gutturalis*), now my particular desideratum, I journeyed down Webber Canyon about a mile southwest of Fyffe. While rounding a rather open hillside covered with mountain misery, I spied a tell-tale feather adhering to the edge of a cavity-entrance in a dead tree-trunk fourteen feet up. I thought it probably the home of some bluebird or chickadee, and my surprise can well be imagined when inspection showed it to contain a brood of Saw-Whet Owls (*Cryptoglaux acadica acadica*) whose breeding here was not only a record for Fyffe, but for California. As it was now almost nightfall I postponed further investigation until I would have opportunity, with returning daylight, to make use of the camera.

The weather, which had been sunny and pleasant since my arrival, turned cloudy next day (May 17), and for a time a mist-like rain fell. While en route to the owl's nest I noticed a flock of eleven Band-tailed Pigeons in a thick grove of lofty pines. Farther on I met with a pair of Blue-fronted Jays, whose nest eight feet up in a manzanita, on a steep hillside, proved to be just completed. Although I did not approach within several feet of this nest, the birds abandoned it, for on revisiting the tree on May 20, I found it had been deserted.

Chopping out the Saw-Whet Owl's nest revealed five almost full-fledged young and a freshly killed mouse. The cavity was fourteen feet from the ground, and the entrance so small that it seemed the parent birds could have gained admittance only with difficulty. Offering little resistance beyond clicking their bills, the five diminutive owlets were carried nearly a mile before I found a suitable place wherein to photograph them. Never have I met with more willing subjects; for although they could fly a short distance, they made no attempt to escape but sat wondrous wise, staring out across the wide expanse of Webber Canyon. Besides taking the group, one of the birds, apparently the oldest, and there was considerable difference in this respect, was photographed perched on a near-by stump. The breeding of this owl here being a state record, I deemed it advisable to send one of the birds to Mr. Joseph Grinnell at the University of California (now no. 23463, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology), while another I kept in captivity and brought back with me to San Francisco. This bird was about the most interesting pet I ever possessed. It would perch contentedly for a half hour or more at a time on one's shoulder or finger or upon some point of vantage, apparently wisely conscious of all that was transpiring around it. The bird had a curious habit of bobbing its head rapidly up and down, in addition to the usual movement sideways. Only at night did I hear the curious, wild, and rather grating cry, for during the day the bird was silent save for clicking its bill off and on like a pair of castanets. In all, it was about the dearest little pet I ever owned

and I felt the loss keenly when it died shortly after my return home. This specimen was given to the California Academy of Sciences. At no time on the several visits I made to the nest of the Saw-Whet Owls were the parent birds seen, although on several occasions I waited patiently for them to appear.

While returning to Fyffe, after my work at the owl nest, I noted an *Empidonax*, either *hammondi* or *wrighti*, a Cassin Vireo (*Lanivireo solitarius cassini*), which was engaged in nest building, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch drilling in a lofty and practically inaccessible nesting site.

It rained hard during the night, and continued intermittently the next day (May 18), making the woods so wet that field work was not only unpleasant but



Fig. 29. NESTING SITE OF THE SAW-WHET OWL ON A RATHER OPEN HILL SLOPE IN WEBBER CANYON, SOUTHWEST OF FYFFE. THE CAVITY OCCUPIED WAS FOURTEEN FEET ABOVE THE GROUND IN THE LARGE STUB IN CENTER OF PICTURE. "MOUNTAIN MISERY" CARPETS THE FOREGROUND.

dangerous, on account of the slippery condition of the tree trunks. After covering several miles through the dripping forest I confined my work to the more open hillsides and to those sections that edged along the high road. Among the bird-homes found during the day, two were curiously an exact repetition of what I had found two days previously. The first, one of the Sierra Junco, held four eggs well along in incubation, and was hidden under a fallen pine log on the edge of a corral. It was made of stems, and lined with fine light-colored grasses and animal hair. The second nest, as before, was a Spurred Towhee's, and was hidden in mountain misery along the irrigation ditch. The bird was flushed from its nest of stems and grasses, lined with fine grasses, disclosing four fresh eggs.

Later, near the State Road, I stole up on a Red-breasted Nuthatch that was industriously hewing out its modest dwelling in a very slender dead tree-trunk only six feet up. In fact this trunk was so narrow in diameter that I drilled a small hole into the nesting cavity from the opposite side of the trunk, and on later visits, by taking out a close fitting plug, I was able to see just what progress was being made. The nest was about completed the day before I left.

The most agreeable surprise of the day was finding a nest of the Audubon Warbler (*Dendroica auduboni auduboni*) with two fresh eggs, in an apple tree eight feet up and close to the hotel. On May 21 this held four typical eggs, they being heavily and richly marked. In fact I believe the eggs of no other Californian warbler can show coloring as rich or markings as varied and heavy as those of this species. The nest was of rootlets, string (an indication of its nearness to the habitations of man), bark strips, and plant fibers, and was profusely lined



Fig. 30. YOUNG SAW-WHET OWLS FOUND MAY 20, 1913, IN WEBBER CANYON NEAR FYFFE. THIS CONSTITUTES THE FIRST DEFINITE BREEDING RECORD FOR THIS OWL IN CALIFORNIA.

with feathers and horsehair.

The weather became clear and pleasant again next morning (May 19), and I decided on Webber Canyon for my day's ramble. While not as heavily timbered as the canyons north and east of Fyffe, it nevertheless supports a wider variety of bird-life, owing to the diversified character of the country. In addition to the predominant coniferous woods there are also vast forests of oak, brush-covered rocky tracts, open fields and, to me not the least important, the wide patches of mountain misery, where I continued my long, and so far unsuccessful, search for a nest of the Calaveras Warbler.

Four feet up in a cedar I found a deserted nest of the Black-throated Gray Warbler (*Dendroica nigrescens*) with a single fresh egg. A White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*), evidently a straggler, was noted in a patch of deer brush, and a Red-breasted Nuthatch was seen nest-excavating

twenty feet up; but the triumph of the day's work was the finding of a Thick-billed Sparrow's nest with four partly incubated eggs. Locating nests of this bird is without a doubt one of the most difficult problems presented to the field worker at Fyffe. Barlow relates how his long search was unrewarded, and I deemed myself quite fortunate in finding one. While working through a patch of very thick brush I came upon the sparrow on her nest. The bird rose reluctantly, flew a short distance but soon returned, and became very solicitous for the safety of her abode and its contents. I have watched Thick-billed Sparrows hour after hour, endeavoring to gain some clue to the location of a hidden nest, and yet the birds would continue unconcernedly feeding or singing or idling their time away, apparently unconscious that such a thing as a nest existed. But now what a difference when the nest was located! Oh, you wise Thick-bills! The



Fig. 31. "TOMMY", THE OLDEST OF THE FIVE SAW-WHET OWLS. THIS INDIVIDUAL WAS KEPT CAPTIVE, BUT LIVED ONLY A SHORT TIME AFTER ITS REMOVAL TO SAN FRANCISCO. IT PROVED ITSELF A GENTLE AND PLAYFUL PET.

nest, of coarse twigs lined with fine bark strips and fibers, was placed three feet up in a tangle of cedar and fir saplings, on a dead bare branch that lay across them and adjacent deer brush. The eggs well exhibit that wide diversity of coloration which prevails in the eggs of this species, for not only are they entirely different from three other sets I have from higher altitudes, but two of them show striking individual variation.

Principally to obtain an index to conditions, I climbed to a nest of the Red-shafted Flicker (*Colaptes cafer collaris*), twenty feet up in a dead black oak on a hillside. The bird flushed, but re-entered the cavity while I was ascending the tree. I had no climbers and twice I slid back down the limbless trunk, but on the third attempt I succeeded in reaching a solitary limb that hospitably gave me foothold. In the cavity, on a bed of wood chips, lay six eggs whose glossy, semi-



transparent shells showed traces of incubation, slight in four and well-marked in two. No other new nests were found during the day except those of the ever abundant Western Robin, Black-headed Grosbeak and Western Chipping Sparrow.

Photography took up most of the following day (May 20). While engaged in this work along the ditch, I located a nest of the Sierra Junco close to where a fallen log crosses the stream (see fig. 25). The nest held four well-incubated eggs; well hidden in mountain misery just above the flowing water, it was only found by watching the birds from the opposite bank. The nest is rather unusual, being made almost entirely of cedar bark, in addition to which are some few weed stems and a lining of fine grasses and animal hair. While using the camera later in Webber Canyon, I spied a Western Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica*

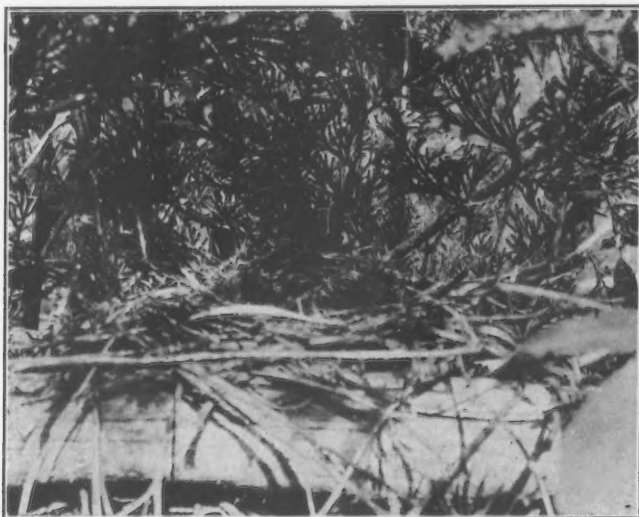


Fig. 32. NEST OF THE THICK-BILLED FOX SPARROW. IT WAS LOCATED IN AN ALMOST IMPENETRABLE THICKET AND HELD FOUR EGGS. NESTS OF THIS BIRD HAVE PROVEN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO FIND ALTHOUGH THE BIRDS THEMSELVES ARE COMMON IN APPROPRIATE LOCALITIES.

*aestiva brewsteri*) weaving its light-colored, hempen, cup-like nest in a small sapling.

On May 21 I ran across a very puzzling set of eggs. The nest, three feet up in deer brush, was in every respect a typical one of the Western Chipping Sparrow, being composed of rootlets and grasses and lined with horsehair. The four eggs it held, however, were short ovate in shape and unspotted, pale bluish-green in color. I hastily concealed myself some distance off to watch, if need be, the whole afternoon for the owner of these most remarkable looking specimens. The parent was fashionably late in appearing, and when she did so I learned the eggs were simply a unique set of that ever-present species, the Western Chipping Sparrow. On close examination I could just discern on one of the eggs some dim

pin-point dots of reddish at the larger end. The set was very tender shelled, and was prepared for the cabinet with considerable difficulty.

During the day I noted a pair of Slender-billed Nuthatches (*Sitta carolinensis aculeata*), which Barlow has not recorded, and also my first Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*). This, however, Barlow has listed as not uncommon. In deer brush eight feet up, I found a nest of the California Bush-tit (*Psaltiriparus minimus californicus*), with eight well-incubated eggs.

Some distance away I flushed a Calaveras Warbler (*Vermivora ruficapilla gutturalis*), but on reaching the spot, after a careful search, I was unable to locate any nest. When almost half an hour had elapsed the bird returned, and after many roundabout flights, finally flew to, and disappeared in, a thick patch of weeds. Advancing very slowly, I succeeded in flushing the bird almost at my feet, from a nest that was placed at the foot of a small deer-brush shrub and completely arched over by pine needles. The nest held five eggs in an advanced stage of incubation, and was made outwardly and almost entirely of cedar bark, mixed with a few pine needles and with a lining of fine rootlets, fine wire-like grasses and hair. It is worthy of note that it contains no soap-root fibre, which Barlow mentions as being usually the principal material.

Next day, May 22, I found but one nest of particular interest, beside the usual number of common ones. This, a Thick-billed Sparrow's, was three feet up in deer brush, newly completed, made of twigs and rootlets, and lined with bark strips. Towards evening I flushed a Tolmie Warbler (*Oporornis tolmici*) from an extensive patch of brush, but it grew dark before I could locate the nest.

The following morning, May 23, I excavated, near the hotel, a nest of the Red-breasted Nuthatch that I had noted the birds drilling on May 13. Now, though ten days had passed, it contained no eggs, although the nest proper was completed. The call of this bird resembles nothing so much as that to which Mr. J. R. Pemberton has compared it, those little toy Christmas horns or bugles the note of which is not over loud and rather mellow. The bird's call note is almost identical with this, and the striking similarity serves to readily identify it.

My short stay had now drawn to a close, and it was very reluctantly that I packed for departure, for never had Fyffe, this outpost on the frontier of the great Sierran forest, appeared more fair. May streams wandered through banks of wild flowers and grass-carpeted woods, where dog-wood trees with their profusion of snowy-petaled blossoms were everywhere conspicuous amid the giant pines, firs and cedars. And, too, unlike the oppressive warmth of late June or July, the weather now was cool and pleasant.

Nor was it Fyffe alone that I regretted leaving, for to the east lay a region that offered even greater temptation. Every day now automobile parties, campers or trampers were heading along this famous pioneer road to higher altitudes, to Slippery Ford, Echo, Summit and Lake Tahoe. Resort keepers, or cattlemen with their herds, went by, old time friends among them who offered the use of saddle-horse or a seat in some slow-moving caravan to make the journey eastward; but unfortunately my way lay in the opposite direction. Ncr was it long before my conveyance rolled up to the door. Grips aboard, a few hasty farewells given, and we were soon bowling along the park-like road to Placerville.

San Francisco, California, December 12, 1913.



## BIRDS OF SITKA AND VICINITY, SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA

By GEORGE WILLET

WITH ONE PHOTO BY E. W. MERRILL

DURING the summers of 1912 and 1913, which the writer spent in the neighborhood of Sitka, Alaska, in the interests of the Bureau of Biological Survey, much time was devoted to the general ornithology of this most interesting section. All the writer's personal notes on this district were made between July 14 and September 2, 1912, and between July 20 and October 3, 1913.

Some of this time was spent in the immediate vicinity of Sitka, and frequent visits were made to Kruzof, St. Lazaria and Biorka islands, as well as to many of the smaller islands in Sitka Sound. I also traversed rather thoroughly several of the more important ranges on Baranof Island, and three times climbed Mt. Edgecumbe, an extinct volcano and the highest peak on Kruzof Island. Finally, through the courtesy of U. S. Forest Ranger George Peterson, I made a trip on the Forest Service launch through Peril Straits to Hooniah Sound and Tenakee Inlet, Chichagof Island, down the east side of Baranof Island as far as Patterson Bay, and across Chatham Straits to the western shores of Kuuiu and Admiralty islands. Landings were made many times during this trip and I was enabled to make investigations of the bird-life in these localities.

My trips around Sitka Sound were generally made in a row boat which was furnished me through the kindness of Mr. Arthur Shoup, Representative to the Territorial Legislature. The trips into the mountains were made on foot and my camp outfit, guns, ammunition, etc., were carried on my back.

On some occasions I travelled alone, but I was several times accompanied by Mr. E. W. Merrill of Sitka, by Mr. Robert Bardon of Grant's Pass, Oregon, and by Forest Ranger Peterson. To each of these three gentlemen I am indebted for much assistance rendered and information given. Mr. Merrill, who is a fellow member of the Cooper Club, has resided in Sitka for over ten years, during which time he has taken a number of valuable specimens, and made many interesting notes on the birds of the region. He very kindly turned over to me all his notes, and the information obtained therefrom has added materially to this paper. I also received many courtesies and much valuable information from Deputy United States Marshals John Goodell and James Brightman, and am indebted to Mr. A. J. Wilkus, formerly in charge of the government experimental station at Sitka, for several specimens of raptorial birds secured by him in the neighborhood of his chicken yard.

For assistance in ascertaining the identity of specimens, obtaining previously published literature, and in looking up old records, I am greatly obligated to Mr. Joseph Grinnell, of the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Mr. H. S. Swarth, of the Los Angeles County Museum of History, Science and Art, Prof. Wells W. Cooke, of the United States Biological Survey, and Mr. W. Lee Chambers of Eagle Rock, California.

The territory herein referred to as Sitka and vicinity comprises Baranof, Kruzof and Chichagof islands with their outlying islets and contiguous waters. As is well known, this district is one of excessive moisture and luxuriant vegetation. On all of the islands, large and small, dense forests of spruce, hemlock and cedar extend down to the very edge of the water. Along the larger streams alders and willows are plentiful, and in many localities a dense undergrowth of

salmon-berries and devil-club, together with fallen logs, makes the woods almost impenetrable. On the slopes of the mountains some distance back from the water's edge are extensive open, boggy meadows covered with coarse grass and various kinds of berry bushes, and sparsely timbered with the squaw pine. Above timber-line, which is at about 2500 feet altitude, two species of heather flourish, furnishing food and protection to ptarmigan, pipits and Savannah sparrows. In walking through the forests, and swamps, and over the bare tops of the mountains, one who is familiar with the abundant bird-life of more favored sections of the United States, is at once struck by the extreme scarcity of bird-life. I once walked for four hours on the mountains of Chichagof Island without seeing a single bird. The only places where land birds are in any sense plentiful are around



Fig. 33. THE SUMMER HOME OF THE DIXON ROCK PTARMIGAN: GREAT EASTERN MOUNTAINS, BARANOF ISLAND, SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA. PHOTO TAKEN SEPTEMBER 25, 1911.

the edges of clearings, in the grass and underbrush bordering the beach, and along streams.

When, however, the ornithologist becomes weary looking for birds where there seemingly are no birds, he may turn his attention to the salt water and the ever interesting variety of water fowl to be found thereon. Gulls, auklets, murrelets, puffins, petrels and many other interesting groups are here in plenty, many species nesting on the outlying islands, others being migrants or stragglers. The most important breeding ground of the water fowl in the vicinity is St. Lazaria Island, a National Bird Reservation, about fifteen miles from Sitka and close to Kruzof Island. There are less important nesting colonies of water birds on the small islands off Biorka, and on Sea Lion Rocks west of Kruzof Island.

This section has many times in the past been visited by ornithologists, the

most noteworthy of these and the time of their visits being as follows: F. H. von Kittlitz, summer of 1827; Ferdinand Bischoff, 1865-66; Tarleton H. Bean, June, 1880; Joseph Grinnell and Joseph Mailliard, summer of 1896; Prof. W. T. Shaw, summer of 1906, and the Alexander Expedition to southeastern Alaska, summer of 1907. I have incorporated in this paper many items from the published notes of these observers, but have omitted a few early records which seem to me to be of doubtful authenticity.

With a few exceptions I have followed the nomenclature adopted by the A. O. U. Committee in the *Check-List* of 1910, and supplement to the same.

**Colymbus holboelli.** Holboell Grebe. Whether this species is a rare resident or only an occasional straggler in the Sitkan district, is a matter yet to be determined. I did not note it at all during 1912, but during 1913 saw it on Sitka Bay on three occasions, as follows: One bird near St. Lazaria Island, July 24; two birds near Sitka, August 14, and one bird at Silver Bay, September 21. The species was taken at Sitka by Bischoff during the Russo-American Telegraph Expedition (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 308).

**Gavia immer.** Common Loon. Noted frequently on salt water throughout the Sitkan district. Most plentiful after August 15.

**Gavia pacifica.** Pacific Loon. At no time during my stay was I able to positively identify this species. Loons, while plentiful, were invariably wild, and I was unable to approach close enough to distinguish the differences between this species and the next. Grinnell (1898, p. 124) records a specimen of the Pacific Loon taken at Sitka by Dr. Wilber, June 26, 1896. It is probably a regular migrant.

**Gavia stellata.** Red-throated Loon. Fairly common summer visitant on fresh water lakes. Plentiful on salt water during migrations. According to Merrill, a pair of these birds nest on Swan Lake, near Sitka, each year. They arrive about April 15, and the eggs are deposited about June 1. During my stay in Sitka, this pair had young on the lake, and they could be seen many times each day flying directly over the town to the salt water in search of food. Their loud quacking notes could often be heard before the birds were visible.

**Lunda cirrhata.** Tufted Puffin. Abundant resident. About two thousand pairs nesting on St. Lazaria Island. A few also nesting on small islets off Biorika Island. Grinnell (1898, p. 124) noted fresh eggs in the former locality June 17, 1896. At the time of my visits to the nesting grounds in late July and August, the nesting cavities nearly all contained young.

**Fratercula corniculata.** Horned Puffin. About a dozen pairs of these puffins were nesting on St. Lazaria Island. The nest cavities were located in the most inaccessible cliffs on the island. Not noted elsewhere in the vicinity.

**Cerorhinca monocerata.** Rhinoceros Auklet. Fairly common on Sitka Bay throughout my stay. A colony of about two hundred pairs was nesting on St. Lazaria. The young were raised and the nesting colony deserted, however, before the time of my arrival on the island in late July. In one burrow an adult bird and a nearly grown young were found dead, the nest cavity having been caved in by a bear and the birds either crushed or smothered (Willett, 1912, p. 423). The burrows of these birds are entirely different in construction and location from those of any of the other birds nesting on the island. They are much larger than those of the petrels, and longer and differently located than those of the puffins. The colony is well up toward the top of the island among the timber, and the burrows frequently run under logs and among the roots of the trees.

**Phaleris psittacula.** Paroquet Auklet. I several times saw birds that I believed to be of this species among the islands in the bay, but was never able to approach within gun shot. Grinnell (1898, p. 124) records a specimen taken by Fred Frobese near Sitka June 8, 1896, and, according to Finsch (1873, p. 82), a specimen from Sitka is in the Leyden Museum. This record is probably taken from Schlegel.

**Synthliboramphus antiquus.** Ancient Murrelet. Rather common on the more exposed bodies of salt water during my entire stay, and probably occurs throughout the year. Not so plentiful as the next species. On August 2, 1913, I found two broken eggs, apparently of this bird, in a burrow among the grass roots on a steep hillside on St. Lazaria Island. One of the eggs was in a fair state of preservation, but they were apparently at least a year old when found.

**Brachyramphus marmoratus.** Marbled Murrelet. Abundant on salt water throughout the district. The young were raised and on the water at the time of my arrival, and I was unable to secure any information as to the location of the nesting grounds.

**Brachyramphus brevirostris.** Kittlitz Murrelet. An adult bird secured at Biorka Island, July 24, 1912, was the only one noted.

**Cepphus columba.** Pigeon Guillemot. Rather plentiful on salt water. Nesting in considerable numbers on St. Lazaria, and in smaller numbers on islands off Biorka.

**Uria troille californica.** California Murre. Common on salt water everywhere. The only nesting colony visited was in a large cave on St. Lazaria Island. This colony numbered about three hundred pairs. The young were nearly all hatched by August 15.

**Stercorarius parasiticus.** Parasitic Jaeger. Not noted at all during 1912, but during 1913 seen on Sitka Bay as follows: Two birds near St. Lazaria Island July 24, and one bird at Crab Bay, Kruzof Island, August 27. On September 9 the species was fairly common in Chatham Straits on the east side of Baranof Island.

**Rissa tridactyla pollicaris.** Pacific Kittiwake. According to Merrill, this bird occurs throughout the year in the vicinity of Sitka. It was very plentiful everywhere on salt water during the time I spent in the section. Although birds in adult plumage were common throughout the summer, no evidence of their nesting was found.

**Larus hyperboreus.** Glaucous Gull. Merrill secured an immature bird of this species at Sitka, November 3, 1908. I did not note it in this locality, but saw several birds along the mainland shore between Juneau and Petersburg, October 6-7, 1913.

**Larus glaucescens.** Glaucous-winged Gull. Abundant resident. According to Merrill, less plentiful in winter than in summer. I found this species nesting in considerable numbers on St. Lazaria and on small islands off Biorka.

**Larus argentatus.** Herring Gull. This gull was first noted at Sitka, October 2, 1913, several birds appearing in the harbor on that date. During the trip from Sitka to Seattle, October 2-10, these birds were abundant, and a large number followed the boat all the way. This is probably a regular migrant.

**Larus brachyrhynchus.** Short-billed Gull. Two birds seen in Sitka Harbor, October 2, 1913. Also noted at Juneau, October 5, and at Petersburg, October 7. Probably a regular migrant throughout the region. Secured at Sitka by Bischoff during the Russo-American Telegraph Expedition (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 305). Noted by the 1907 Alexander Expedition at Red Bluff Bay, Baranof

Island, in June; at Bear and Rodman bays, Baranof Island, in August, and at Hooniah and Idaho Inlet, Chichagof Island, in June and July (Grinnell, 1909, p. 190).

**Larus philadelphia.** Bonaparte Gull. Seen occasionally on Sitka Bay throughout the summer. More plentiful on the east side of Baranof Island, on Admiralty and Kuiu islands, and along the mainland shore.

**Xema sabini.** Sabine Gull. Three immature birds seen, two of which were secured on Sitka Bay, August 3, 1913. Not further noted.

**Sterna paradisaea.** Arctic Tern. Seen on two or three occasions on Sitka bay during the summer of 1912. Not noted in that locality in 1913. Plentiful, and apparently nesting on gravel bars in Taku Inlet, on the mainland, July 19, 1913.

**Diomedea nigripes.** Black-footed Albatross. Four birds seen on the west coast of Baranof Island, September 2, 1912. According to Merrill, this bird is occasionally seen in Sitka Bay during stormy weather. He secured a specimen May 20, 1908.

**Fulmarus glacialis glupischa.** Pacific Fulmar. One bird in the dark phase of plumage seen in Chatham Straits, east side of Baranof Island, September 6, 1913.

**Puffinus griseus.** Sooty Shearwater. Common on Sitka Bay during August and September. Also seen in Chatham Straits, September 5-9, 1913.

**Aestrelata fisheri.** Fisher Petrel. Merrill secured a male specimen of this rare petrel near Sitka, May 17, 1908. Now in collection of University of Washington.

**Oceanodroma furcata.** Forked-tailed Petrel. I estimated that there were about two thousand pairs of these birds nesting on St. Lazaria, the only place in the region where they were found breeding. Their nests were nearly all located among the grass roots on the steeper hillsides, and the young were practically all hatched by the middle of July. Grinnell (1897a, p. 76) found the eggs mostly advanced in incubation June 17, 1896. The only time that I noted any of these petrels away from the breeding colony was September 30 and October 1, 1913, when about thirty birds were seen feeding around the Sitka docks. At this time the weather was very stormy outside. Merrill states that he has occasionally seen this and the next species on Sitka Bay in fall and spring, but never in great numbers.

**Oceanodroma beali.** Beal Petrel. Although this form has not been recognized by the A. O. U. Committee, I find that a series of breeding birds from St. Lazaria Island are uniformly smaller than specimens of *O. leucorhoa* from the Atlantic coast, thus substantiating the characters ascribed by Emerson (1906, p. 54) to the form *beali*. In wing and tail measurements *beali* is intermediate between *leucorhoa* and *kaedingi*, slightly nearer the latter. In *beali* the wing averages about .5 inch shorter than in *leucorhoa*, and about .4 inch longer than in *kaedingi*. The tail is about .25 inch shorter than that of *leucorhoa* and the same amount longer than that of *kaedingi*. In color *beali* is slightly grayer than *kaedingi*. I estimated that there were about twenty thousand pairs of these petrels in the St. Lazaria colony. They were nesting on the grassy hillsides in company with the last species and also on top of the island among the timber. They breed generally later than *furcata*. Many nests containing fresh eggs were noted as late as July 31 (1912). Grinnell (1897a, p. 76) found the eggs of this species all fresh June 17, 1896.

**Phalacrocorax auritus cinnatus.** White-crested Cormorant. This bird is evidently only an occasional straggler to the vicinity of Sitka. It was not seen

at all by me, but Merrill reports its occasional occurrence. He secured a specimen in the spring of 1906, and another in the spring of 1908. Two specimens taken at Sitka by Bischoff are mentioned by Dall and Bannister (1869, p. 302), and Finsch (1873, p. 86) speaks of a specimen from Sitka being in the Leyden Museum (probably quoted from Schlegel).

**Phalacrocorax pelagicus pelagicus.** Pelagic Cormorant. Fairly common everywhere on salt water, but, according to local observers, much less abundant than formerly. In 1912 a few pairs were nesting on the small islands off Biorka, and about one hundred and fifty pairs were breeding on St. Lazaria. In 1913, although I canvassed the latter island thoroughly, I failed to find a single occupied nest. The birds, mostly immatures, were plentiful around the island but were not nesting. Brightman informs me that fifteen years ago this bird nested in great numbers on St. Lazaria, and Grinnell (1898, p. 126) found them abundant in 1896. The only explanation I can offer for their diminishing numbers is the persistent depredations of the Northwestern Crow (*Corvus caurinus*), which species appears to subsist to a great extent in summer on the eggs and young of the luckless cormorants. In 1912 I found the ground under the crows' roosts literally covered with the shells of cormorants' eggs and I doubt if any of the cormorants raised a full brood.

Although the pelagic cormorants of this district have been referred to *P. p. robustus*, I find that the characters ascribed to that form are not to be found in a series of specimens taken.

**Mergus americanus.** American Merganser. Not very common. I saw an adult male near Old Sitka, August 16, the only one personally noted. Merrill took a male near Sitka, October 20, 1908, and saw two birds that were shot in the same locality in the spring of 1903. The species was also noted at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall and Bannister, 1869, p. 301). Two females with broods of young were seen by F. Stephens at Red Bluff Bay, Baranof Island, June 19, 1907, and a downy young was secured by J. Dixon in the same locality two days earlier. The species was seen once at Hooniah, Chichagof Island, the last week in June (Grinnell, 1909, p. 193).

**Mergus serrator.** Red-breasted Merganser. Fairly common summer visitant. According to Merrill, appears in early May and leaves mostly in October. I noted this saw-bill in many different localities on both fresh and salt water, and saw broods of young at Tenakee Inlet, Chichagof Island, and Silver Bay, near Sitka. The flesh of this species was found to be very palatable, although by the time the birds arrive in California, they are generally strong-tasting and unfit to eat.

**Anas platyrhynchos.** Mallard. Breeds in small numbers; abundant during migrations, and, according to Merrill, a few remain throughout the winter. In early September appeared in large numbers at mouths of streams, and was still abundant at the time of my departure in early October. Merrill states that, while he has never found the nest, he has noted downy young on several of the fresh water lakes in the vicinity.

**Chaulelasmus streperus.** Gadwall. Merrill secured a specimen of this duck at Lisianski Bay, near Sitka, September 22, 1911. This is the only record I have seen for the region.

**Mareca americana.** Baldpate. Apparently a rare migrant, much more plentiful along the mainland shore. Merrill took one specimen at Sitka in the fall.

**Nettion carolinense.** Green-winged Teal. According to Merrill, abundant in spring and fall, less plentiful in winter, and a few remain through the summer and breed around fresh water lakes. I found this species plentiful in com-



pany with mallards and pintails around mouths of fresh water streams in September, 1913.

**Spatula clypeata.** Shoveller. Rare migrant. Merrill saw two birds that were shot near Sitka in the fall of 1904, and Brightman took a specimen on Admiralty Island in 1898. According to hunters, fairly plentiful along the mainland shore near Juneau.

**Dafla acuta.** Pintail. Fairly common migrant. I noted these birds on Sitka Bay in late August, 1913, and took two specimens near Sitka, September 26, following. The birds taken were feeding on a salt water snail (*Littorina sitchana*), and were gorged with the small shells. According to Merrill, occurs in the spring in late April and early May.

**Marila marila.** Scaup Duck. According to Merrill, abundant in summer and in migrations, less plentiful in winter. So far has not been found nesting in the locality but probably does so occasionally, as Grinnell (1898, p. 126) notes a nearly fledged juvenile obtained July 15, 1896. I found these birds common in flocks among the islands throughout the summer.

**Clangula islandica.** Barrow Golden-eye. Although it is very probable that both golden-eyes occur in this locality, the only record I have seen of specimens taken and positively identified is of the above species, secured by Bischoff (Dall and Bannister, 1869, p. 298). Merrill informs me that golden-eyes are most plentiful in spring and fall, but are found in small numbers throughout the year. He has taken downy young on Swan Lake, near Sitka, and Brightman has seen downy young on Chichagof Island. Neither of these two observers, however, were able to inform me as to which species of golden-eye these birds were referable. Swarth (1911, p. 43) records *C. c. americana* as quite common during April at Keku Straits and at Three-mile Arm, Kuiu Island. They were also seen on Prince of Wales Island in early May, following. *C. islandica* was not noted at all in this region. From these facts and from what is further known of the ranges of the two species, it is probable that *americana*, though it has so far not been definitely recorded from Sitka, will be found to be the commonest of the two forms in that locality.

**Charitonetta albeola.** Buffle-head. According to Merrill, this duck is plentiful from October to May, but most abundant during migrations. It was taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 298).

**Harelda hyemalis.** Old-squaw. According to Merrill, the Old-squaw, or Pintail, as it is locally known, is a common winter visitant, not appearing in any numbers, however, until early November, and remaining plentiful until May.

**Histrionicus histrionicus.** Harlequin Duck. Common throughout the year. I noted flocks of these ducks feeding around the rocks in many localities on Sitka Sound and neighboring inlets during the summer months. According to Grinnell (1898, p. 126), fully fledged young appear about August 5. The same observer saw an adult in June two or three miles up Indian River, where it was probably nesting. Deputy U. S. Marshal Goodell informs me that he has seen downy young at Old Sitka, and he believes the birds nest along the stream that empties into the bay at that point.

**Oidemia americana.** Scoter. During September, 1913, I several times noted this species near Sitka. It was, however, not plentiful, being greatly outnumbered by the two following.

**Oidemia deglandi.** White-winged Scoter. The most abundant of the surf ducks in this section. Plentiful on the salt water throughout the summer, and

even more abundant during migrations. According to Merrill, occurs also in winter.

**Oidemia perspicillata.** Surf Scoter. Seen occasionally during the summer months. Becomes more plentiful about August 15, and is abundant by the middle of September. Merrill states that it winters in considerable numbers. According to Dall and Bannister (1869, p. 300), Bischoff obtained the eggs of this bird near Sitka.

**Anser albifrons gambeli.** White-fronted Goose. Rather common in migrations, which occur mostly in October and April. Merrill has taken several specimens and seen many others that were killed in the vicinity. I saw two birds that were shot by Brightman on Swan Lake, September 29, 1913.

**Branta canadensis canadensis.** Canada Goose. Two specimens taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 295).

**Branta canadensis occidentalis.** White-cheeked Goose. Fairly common summer resident, breeding around fresh water lakes and ponds. More plentiful during migrations. Known to nest in several localities near Sitka, also on Chichagof and Kruzof islands. By early September was plentiful in small flocks at the mouths of streams, but was exceedingly wild, and no specimens were obtained by me, though I saw several brought into Sitka that had been shot by Indians with rifles. These birds are easily domesticated and several small flocks have been reared by local people.

**Phalacrocorax auritus.** Emperor Goose. The A. O. U. *Check-List* (1910, p. 88) mentions Sitka as a record station of this species. Professor Cook informs me that this is based on the fact that Dresser (1903, p. 598) lists Sitka as a record locality for the species. There is no intimation anywhere in this work, however, to show what the basis of the record was.

As this goose has occurred in winter in British Columbia and has even been recorded at this season from northern California, it is not at all unlikely that it should occur occasionally at Sitka. For this reason I have followed the example of the A. O. U. Committee and included the species in this list, although the evidence as to its actual occurrence in the locality, as given above, must be considered weak unless it can be further substantiated.

**Olor columbianus.** Whistling Swan. According to Merrill, the Whistling Swan is rather a common migrant, the migrations taking place mostly in October and early November, and in April. During the fall migration, flocks frequently alight on lakes and ponds, but in spring they usually pass over without stopping. Merrill has seen flocks passing high above the mountain ranges during the spring migration. He secured a specimen October 30, 1912, and knew of seven birds being taken by an Indian in October and November, 1910. Brightman saw a flock of about twenty-five swans going over Sitka, September 28, 1913.

The flesh of this bird is much prized by the Indians, who cut it into strips and smoke it. They also use the skins with the down for making articles of clothing.

**Ardea herodias fannini.** Northwestern Coast Heron. Occasionally seen in many different localities. Partial to timber-bordered streams and kelp patches. I saw several of these birds that were brought into Sitka by boys and sold to a local Chinaman. They are highly prized as a delicacy by this race.

**Grus canadensis.** Little Brown Crane. According to Merrill and Brightman, a regular migrant but usually passing over without stopping. The latter gentleman has taken specimens near Killisnoo, west side of Admiralty Island.

**Fulica americana.** Coot. Rare straggler. Merrill took a specimen near



Sitka in September, 1908, and knows of two or three others being taken in fall.

**Phalaropus fulicarius.** Red Phalarope. The main migration route of this bird apparently does not include the vicinity of Sitka. The only time it was noted by me was on September 9, 1913, when three birds were seen in Chatham Straits, east of Baranof Island. They were closely examined through a glass and their identity positively determined.

**Lobipes lobatus.** Northern Phalarope. Common on salt water all through the summer, and very abundant during migrations. Frequently noted around tide rips feeding among the drift brought together by meeting currents.

**Gallinago delicata.** Wilson Snipe. According to Merrill, frequently seen on swamp lands in spring and fall. Taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 291). I saw a single bird of this species in a swampy meadow near Sitka, September 13, 1913. This was the only one seen by me in the region.

**Macrorhamphus griseus scolopaceus.** Long-billed Dowitcher. An immature bird taken on Kruzof Island, August 27, 1913, was the only one noted. It was in company with seven Hudsonian Curlews.

**Tringa canutus.** Knot. Single specimen taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 291).

**Arquatella maritima conesi.** Aleutian Sandpiper. Found abundant at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 291). This species and several others of the waders which have been previously noted by Bischoff and others, were not seen at all by me. I believe this is due to a certain extent to the persistent persecution of birds of the wading group by local hunters. As soon as a flock of waders is seen on the beach, the hunters appear and bombard them until they are either all killed or leave the locality. As a result waders were uniformly scarce in the immediate vicinity during my entire stay.

**Pisobia maculata.** Pectoral Sandpiper. I found this species fairly plentiful at the head of Hooniah Sound, Chichagof Island, September 10, 1913, and secured several specimens. This is the only time I noted it, but it is probably a regular migrant. A single specimen was taken by Bischoff at Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 292).

**Pisobia bairdi.** Baird Sandpiper. One specimen obtained at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 292).

**Pisobia minutilla.** Least Sandpiper. Abundant migrant. I saw this species in many different localities during the fall, and Merrill tells me it is plentiful in spring. Grinnell (1898, p. 126) noted it as early as July 2.

**Pelidna alpina sakhalina.** Red-backed Sandpiper. Evidently a rather rare migrant. I saw one specimen on an outlying rock near Kruzof Island, July 31, 1912, the only one seen by me in the vicinity. Bischoff took ten specimens at Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 291).

**Ereunetes pusillus.** Semipalmated Sandpiper. According to Dall and Bannister (1869, p. 292), this species was taken at Sitka by Bischoff. It has also been recorded by Swarth (1911, p. 52) from Thomas Bay, on the mainland opposite Kupreanof Island. All specimens of *Ereunetes* taken by me in the vicinity of Sitka were referable to the next species.

**Ereunetes mauri.** Western Sandpiper. Common migrant on sandy beaches. Became plentiful in late July and remained so up to the time I left, the first part of October. According to Merrill, is most abundant in the spring in April and early May.

**Calidris leucophaea.** Sanderling. Evidently a rare migrant. I saw one bird

on Kruzof Island, August 26, 1913, but did not note the species further. Two specimens were secured at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 292).

**Totanus melanoleucus.** Greater Yellow-legs. Taken at Sitka by Kittlitz (1858, p. 250), and Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 292).

**Totanus flavipes.** Yellow-legs. The only time I noted this species in the region was on July 24, 1912, when a flock of about a dozen birds was seen at the lake on Biorka Island, and two specimens secured. It has been previously recorded from Sitka by Kittlitz (1858, p. 258), and Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 292).

**Heteractitis incanus.** Wandering Tattler. Frequently seen around rocky islands. Most plentiful on Kruzof.

**Tryngites subruficollis.** Buff-breasted Sandpiper. One specimen secured at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 293).

**Actitis macularius.** Spotted Sandpiper. Common in late summer and fall on Kruzof Island and at head of Silver Bay. Occasionally noted in other localities. The 1907 Alexander Expedition secured an adult and a downy young at Port Frederick, Chichagof Island, July 27, and Dixon noted a pair that evidently had eggs or young near a stream at the head of Idaho Inlet, the same island, July 20-25 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 202).

**Numenius hudsonicus.** Hudsonian Curlew. Regular migrant but not very plentiful. I noted the species several times in late summer and fall, and Merrill has taken it in spring.

**Squatarola squatarola.** Black-bellied Plover. Apparently a regular migrant in small numbers. Noted several times on Kruzof Island in late summer and fall. A large flock was also seen near Killisnoo, Admiralty Island, September 5, 1913. Bischoff took three specimens at Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 290), and an adult male in summer plumage was taken by Bean (1882, p. 163) June 8, 1880.

**Charadrius dominicus dominicus.** Golden Plover. Rather rare migrant. Bischoff took the species at Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 289), and Grinnell (1898, p. 127) records an immature male taken by Professor Hindshaw August 16, 1896. Merrill secured a male in a swamp near Sitka, May 21, 1908. A single bird of this species was seen by Merrill and myself at an altitude of over 4000 feet in the Great Eastern Mountains, Baranof Island, September 18, 1913. It was flying over the snow banks and glaciers and seemed considerably out of its natural element.

**Aegialitis semipalmata.** Semipalmated Plover. Very common migrant. Fall migration begins late in July and continues through September.

**Aphriza virgata.** Surf Bird. During the two summers spent in the region, I failed to find this species, though it was particularly sought for, so it is apparently not plentiful. Bischoff secured four specimens near Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 290), and Grinnell (1898, p. 127) took sixteen birds from a flock on a rocky islet, July 21, 1896.

**Arenaria interpres morinella.** Ruddy Turnstone. Rare migrant. I secured a specimen on Kruzof Island, August 12, 1912. Two or three others were seen at the same time. They were with a large flock of the next species on a sandy beach.

**Arenaria melanocephala.** Black Turnstone. Abundant migrant. Noted occasionally during the summer months. These birds are known to the local hunters as "plover" and are killed in large numbers, as they gather in big flocks and

are easily approached. I have seen one hunter come into Sitka with over a hundred birds.

**Haematopus bachmani.** Black Oystercatcher. Fairly common on outlying rocky islands. This species is also hunted to a considerable extent, and from what I could learn, is not as abundant as formerly.

**Dendragapus obscurus fuliginosus.** Sooty Grouse. While this bird could hardly be considered abundant, it is very generally distributed and was noted in the timber in many different localities, perhaps most plentifully on Kruzof Island. Small young were seen on the latter island July 17, 1912. The old birds were found to be rather tough eating, but the birds of the year were very palatable after hanging two or three days.

**Lagopus lagopus alexandrae.** Alexander Willow Ptarmigan. Apparently much less plentiful than the next species. The only place I found this ptarmigan was at an altitude of about 3000 feet on the slopes of Mt. Edgecumbe, Kruzof Island. On July 31, 1913, a small flock made up of this and the next species was flushed from the heather above timber line and specimens of both secured. *Alexandrae* was not seen on Baranof, and Merrill has never taken it, so it can not be considered plentiful in the region. Two specimens taken near Sitka by Bischoff are mentioned by Dall and Bannister (1869, p. 287).

An adult male, the type of this subspecies, was secured with an immature male by F. Stephens at Bear Bay, on Peril Straits, north end of Baranof Island, August 26, 1907. Another adult male was taken by Mr. Stephens near Hooniah, Chichagof Island, June 25, the same year (Grinnell, 1909, p. 204).

**Lagopus rupestris dixonii.** Dixon Rock Ptarmigan. Fairly common on Baranof and Kruzof islands. I failed to find it on Chichagof, but it is said to occur there in some numbers. The type, an adult male, together with another adult, was taken by J. Dixon, near Port Frederick, Chichagof Island, July 30, 1907 (Grinnell, l. c., p. 207). During the summer months these birds keep well up toward the summits of the mountain ranges, above timber line, where they feed on heather buds and berries. Owing to the difficulties in ascending these mountains, specimens are hard to secure at this season. They apparently move in bodies from one section of the mountains to another, and locating them is largely a matter of luck. I have been in sections of the mountains where sign less than a week old was abundant, but the most diligent search failed to locate a single bird. Whether these changes of location are due to the weather or food supply, I am unable to state.

I secured specimens of this form above the Lucky Chance mine in the Great Eastern Mountains, Baranof Island, at an altitude of about 3500 feet, August 28, 1912, and at a little less altitude on Mt. Edgecumbe, Kruzof Island, July 31, 1913. One of the birds taken in the latter locality was a fledgeling about two or three weeks old. Merrill informs me that during the winter months these ptarmigan come down to the coast and are frequently seen in the central part of Sitka.

**Zenaidura macroura marginella.** Western Mourning Dove. One record. Merrill took a male near Sitka September 14, 1912.

**Circus hudsonius.** Marsh Hawk. I secured an immature female in the flesh which was killed by a hunter near Tenakee, Chichagof Island, September 3, 1913.

**Accipiter velox.** Sharp-shinned Hawk. Rather common in the timber everywhere. Frequently seen among trees in the town.

**Astur atricapillus striatulus.** Western Goshawk. I was unable to obtain any information as to the breeding of the goshawk in this region. It is most plentiful in the vicinity of Sitka in the fall, some years occurring in much greater num-

bers than others. During August, 1912, I noted the birds frequently and secured specimens, but during the same season the following year, they were very scarce, only one or two being seen.

**Buteo borealis alascensis.** Alaska Red-tail. Seen occasionally from the coast up to 4000 feet in the mountains. A specimen taken in the mountains of Baranof Island, August 28, 1912, was gorged with a small rodent (*Microtus*), while another taken on Kruzof Island, August 26, 1913, contained the remains of grouse. This hawk was most plentiful near the upper edge of the timber and was frequently seen hunting above timber line. Bean (1882, p. 162) records a specimen taken near Sitka June 5, 1880. J. Dixon took a specimen at Port Frederick, Chichagof Island, July 28, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 211).

**Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis.** Rough-legged Hawk. Taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall and Bannister, 1869, p. 272).

**Haliaeetus leucocephalus alascanus.** Northern Bald Eagle. The most common raptorial bird of the region, occurring from the ocean to the tops of the mountains. The nest is always placed near salt water, all those noted being in tall coniferous trees. The birds seen in the high mountains during the summer were nearly all immature. The young leave the nest late in August. According to Brightman, the eggs are deposited in late April and early May.

During the early summer months these birds apparently subsist to a considerable extent on fawns. Several dead eagles examined at this season were gorged with fawn meat, and the claws were covered with hair. The hunters of the region claim that the eagle is the worst enemy the deer have, and kill them at every opportunity. In the early fall when the salmon are running up the streams to spawn, these birds feed largely on fish, and they may be seen in numbers around every salmon stream. A nest examined on St. Lazaria Island in August, 1912, contained the remains of a great number of Tufted Puffins and young Glaucous-winged Gulls (Willett, 1912, p. 421).

**Falco peregrinus anatum.** Duck Hawk. Fairly well distributed among the islands but nowhere plentiful. Although the duck hawk of this region has been generally referred to *F. p. pealei*, specimens taken prove to be referable to *anatum*, as did specimens taken by the 1907 Alexander Expedition near Killisnoo, Admiralty Island (Grinnell, 1909, p. 215). On October 1, 1913, I saw one of these hawks swoop down and carry off a Forked-tailed Petrel from a small flock near the Sitka dock.

**Falco columbarius suckleyi.** Black Pigeon Hawk. In the last A. O. U. *Check-List* (1910, p. 165) Sitka is given as a record station for this species. I am informed by Professor W. W. Cooke that this record is based on the range as given by Baird, Brewer and Ridgway (1874, p. 143) in the key to the species of the genus *Falco*. Here the habitat of *F. c. suckleyi* is given as "northwest coast region from Oregon to Sitka." On page 147 the habitat is given as "coast district of northern California, Oregon and Washington (probably northward to Alaska)." The basis upon which Sitka is included in the range of the form as given on page 143 is not stated. Grinnell (1898, p. 123) mentions seeing pigeon hawks, presumably *F. c. suckleyi*, in the vicinity of Sitka during the summer of 1896. On August 10, 1913, while at an altitude of about 2500 feet in the mountains near Sitka, I shot a very dark colored pigeon hawk. Unfortunately it fell into an icy lake where it was impossible to secure it. This was the only time I noted the pigeon hawk in the region, and it must be regarded as far from common. As four specimens secured by the 1909 Alexander Expedition at Thomas Bay, Port Snettisham and Taku River, on the mainland, proved to be referable

to *F. c. columbarius* (Swarth, 1911, p. 63), it is very probable that this form also occurs at Sitka.

**Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis.** Osprey. Rare summer visitant. Bischoff took specimens of this bird with the eggs near Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 272), and Bean (1882, p. 162) records a specimen taken at Hot Springs, near Sitka, June 9, 1880. I was informed by Merrill that the fish hawk is occasionally seen in the vicinity, and that a pair formerly nested at Silver Bay. I never met with the species personally in the region. J. Dixon saw four or five birds at Killisnoo, Admiralty Island, June 14, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 215).

**Asio flammeus.** Short-eared Owl. Occurs on marsh lands during migrations, sometimes remaining into early winter. Forest Ranger Peterson gave me two specimens taken by him at Fish Bay, Baranof Island, November 27, 1912. Brightman saw a bird of this species in the marsh at Swan Lake, September 30, 1913.

**Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa.** Great Gray Owl. Obtained at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 273).

**Cryptoglaux funerea richardsoni.** Richardson Owl. Merrill secured a specimen of this owl at Sitka in the fall of 1907.

**Otus asio kennicotti.** Kennicott Screech Owl. Type taken at Sitka by Bischoff during the Russo-American Telegraph Expedition. Described by D. G. Elliot (1867, p. 99). Figured by Baird (1869, pl. xxvii). Merrill has seen this species in flight several times and found one specimen dead. He considers it far from common.

**Bubo virginianus saturatus.** Dusky Horned Owl. During the two summers spent in the Sitkan district I never saw a live owl of any kind, although they were particularly sought for. From information secured, however, I should judge that the Dusky Horned Owl is the commonest owl of the region. Merrill has taken a number of specimens, and has seen several more that were shot in the vicinity of Sitka. A. J. Wilkus, who was formerly in charge of the government experimental farm at Sitka, gave me a specimen that he shot in his chicken yard at 2 A. M. August 29, 1912. Two birds, one of which I saw, were shot in the town on the night of September 25, 1913. F. Stephens took a specimen at Rodman Bay, Baranof Island, August 15, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 216).

**Nyctea nyctea.** Snowy Owl. Winter visitant. Merrill took a male near Sitka, November 2, 1908, and a female November 17, following. I was told of several others shot in the vicinity in winter. Nelson (1887, p. 154) mentions a specimen in the National Museum collected at Sitka during the winter of 1881-82.

**Surnia ulula caparoch.** Hawk Owl. Obtained by Bischoff at Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 274).

**Ceryle alcyon caurina.** Northwestern Belted Kingfisher. Fairly common resident. Frequents the mouths of streams, and shores of islands and inlets. In early August, 1912, a nest containing young was noted in a gravel bank on Kruzof Island.

**Dryobates villosus sitkensis.** Sitka Hairy Woodpecker. Not very common, but generally distributed throughout the timbered country. In a day's walk through the timber one would probably see or hear two or three of these birds. They are exceedingly wary and hard to secure. A specimen secured by the writer and one taken by Merrill, as well as the series from southeastern Alaska in the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, are certainly readily distinguishable from *D. v. harrisi* of the Puget Sound region by their light colored

under parts and more conspicuously white-spotted wing coverts. For this reason I have used the name given this bird by Swarth (1911b, pp. 313-318) instead of including it under *harrisi* as is done by the A. O. U. Committee.

***Dryobates pubescens nelsoni*.** Nelson Downy Woodpecker. I saw an adult male downy woodpecker on Kruszof Island August 25, 1913. I was armed only with a rifle at the time and did not collect it. Merrill has seen the species a few times near Sitka, and it was secured by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 274). It is one of the least common residents of the region. *Dryobates pubescens glacialis* of Grinnell (1910, p. 390).

***Picoides americanus americanus*.** American Three-toed Woodpecker. An adult male taken by C. Littlejohn at an altitude of 2300 feet near Hooniah, Chichagof Island, June 25, 1907, was used by Grinnell (1909, p. 217) as type of a new subspecies, *P. a. fumipectus*. This form, however, is not recognized by the A. O. U. Committee. A specimen of the three-toed woodpecker was taken by A. E. Hasselborg at Freshwater Bay, Chichagof Island, November 27, 1909 (Swarth, 1911a, p. 69).

***Sphyrapicus varius ruber*.** Northern Red-breasted Sapsucker. Merrill has seen this bird on one or two occasions in the timbered swamps back of Sitka. It is, however, decidedly uncommon. Although the name *S. ruber notkensis* is used by the A. O. U. Committee for the northern form of the Red-breasted Sapsucker, it seems to me that, in view of the facts pointed out by Swarth (1912, pp. 35-38), this name is untenable.

***Colaptes auratus luteus*.** Northern Flicker. I never saw this bird in the region, and Merrill has noted it but once, on September 26, 1913, when he saw a single bird in the swamp back of Sitka. Grinnell (1898, p. 127) mentions seeing dance costumes of the Indians decorated with wing and tail feathers of this and the next species. I have seen a number of these costumes but the feathers used were all of the next species.

***Colaptes cafer saturator*.** Northwestern Flicker. Rather frequently seen in the forests. An immature specimen was secured on Biorka Island July 24, 1912.

***Chaetura vauxi*.** Vaux Swift. Fifteen or twenty of these swifts were seen at Patterson Bay, east side of Baranof Island, September 7, 1913. They were feeding around a waterfall, and a specimen was secured. A single bird was also noted at Cascade Bay, a few miles to the northward, September 9, following.

***Selasphorus rufus*.** Rufous Hummingbird. Summer visitant. Generally distributed but not very plentiful. Noted from the water's edge to 3500 feet in the mountains.

***Empidonax difficilis difficilis*.** Western Flycatcher. Summer visitant. I saw and heard this species occasionally in the woods back of Sitka. Grinnell (1898, p. 128) found them common in the same locality in the summer of 1896. June 30 he took a female containing an egg ready to be laid. He noted young appearing with their parents August 1. Bean (1882, p. 161) took an adult male near Sitka June 5, 1880, and saw several others in the same locality. A specimen was taken by F. Stephens at Red Bluff Bay, Baranof Island, June 14, 1907, and one was seen at Rodman Bay, same island, in late August, following (Grinnell, 1909, p. 220).

***Pica pica hudsonia*.** Magpie. According to Merrill, the magpie is only an occasional fall straggler to Sitka, being more frequently seen on Chichagof and Admiralty islands. He secured a male near Sitka, October 20, 1908, and a female about twenty miles north of Sitka, October 28, 1912. He has seen a few others in the vicinity in fall. According to Dall and Bannister (1869, p. 286),



Bischoff found the species abundant at Sitka. It may possibly have been more plentiful in Bischoff's time. At any rate it can not be considered abundant, nor even common, at the present time.

**Cyanocitta stelleri stelleri.** Steller Jay. Common resident. Most plentiful along the shores and in clearings in the timber.

**Corvus corax principalis.** Northern Raven. Very common and generally distributed throughout the region. Plentiful in the streets of Sitka and on the nearby beaches, feeding on refuse and carrion. They were also noted on the tops of the mountain ranges where they were frequently seen playing on the snow banks and glaciers. They would dig holes in the snow and, lying down in them, would scratch the snow over their backs with bill and wings, the coolness secured in this way evidently affording them great enjoyment. They frequently follow the bald eagles when the latter are hunting, probably in hopes of securing a share of the prey. On one occasion I had killed a deer and left it for a couple of hours. On my return the eyes and part of the intestines had been picked out by the ravens. I was never able to find the nest of this species nor could I find anyone who had seen one. They certainly breed in large numbers somewhere in the region but probably some little distance from Sitka.

The raven is very fond of clams, abalones, sea urchins and other shell fish, which are secured from the rocks at low tide. The shells are frequently found high up on the hillsides, where they have been carried by the ravens. On one occasion Merrill watched a number of birds standing around a hog that was digging clams from the mud. As fast as the clams were brought to the surface they were appropriated by the ravens.

The raven heads the list of birds deemed sacred by the Indians. Among others are the owl, woodpecker and kingfisher. These are often seen in grotesque figures on the totem poles.

**Corvus caurinus.** Northwestern Crow. Abundant on the islands and along the beaches. Nests from which the young had emerged were noted on St. Lazaria and Biorka islands. During the nesting season this Crow feeds to a great extent on the eggs and young of sea birds. In the fall after the young are raised and the sea birds are through nesting, they gather in large flocks along the beaches at low tide, feeding on shell fish and crustaceans, and when the tide is in, scratching among the drift kelp along the shore.

**Nucifraga columbiana.** Clarke Nutcracker. Single specimen secured by Bischoff at Sitka (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 286).

**Euphagus carolinus.** Rusty Blackbird. A few specimens taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 285). Single specimen seen by A. E. Hasselborg at Freshwater Bay, Chichagof Island, November 25, 1909 (Swarth, 1911a, p. 80).

**Pinicola enucleator flammula.** Kadiak Pine Grosbeak. According to Merrill, this bird is occasionally seen throughout the year but is most plentiful in October and November. On August 24, 1912, while Merrill and I were walking in the swamp back of Sitka, he secured an immature bird of this species which he presented to me. This was the only one seen at the time. August 13, 1913, I saw a small flock of these birds in the tops of tall trees along Indian River. One was shot but dropped in the dense underbrush and was lost. The species was noted by the 1907 Alexander Expedition on Chichagof Island (Hooniah, June 25, Port Frederick, July 25, and Idaho Inlet, July 20-25), and six specimens secured (Grinnell, 1909, p. 222). It was also taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 281).

**Loxia curvirostra minor.** Crossbill. Common, though apparently very irregular in their movements. During August, 1912, I secured several specimens of this bird and found it very common on Kruzof and St. Lazaria islands, and in the forest back of Sitka. At the same season in 1913, they were far from plentiful, the only ones seen being high up on the mountain sides. Specimens taken in 1912 seem to possess the characters ascribed by Grinnell (1909, p. 223) to the race *L. c. sitkensis*. This form has not been accepted by the A. O. U. Committee.

**Loxia leucoptera.** White-winged Crossbill. Four specimens taken by the 1907 Alexander Expedition at Hooniah, Chichagof Island, June 25 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 225).

**Leucosticte tephrocotis littoralis.** Hepburn Rosy Finch. A specimen taken at Sitka by Bischoff and one taken at Fort Simpson, B. C., were used by Baird (1869, p. 318) in describing this form. The species was noted by the 1907 Alexander Expedition near Hooniah, Chichagof Island, at an altitude of about 2500 feet, June 21-27 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 226). Although I traversed several of the mountain ranges of Baranof Island rather thoroughly and looked particularly for this bird, I never saw it, so it must be rather uncommon.

**Acanthis linaria linaria.** Redpoll. Specimens from Sitka mentioned by Dall and Bannister (1869, p. 28).

**Spinus pinus.** Pine Siskin. Common summer resident. Found most plentifully in shrubbery and evergreen growth near the town.

**Plectrophenax nivalis nivalis.** Snow Bunting. Occasional winter visitant. Merrill saw three birds at Sitka in early December, 1910. He also noted five birds in the same locality, November 17, 1911, and seven birds December 7, 1912. One of the latter was secured. In all these instances the birds only remained a few days and disappeared. The species was also taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 282).

**Calcarius lapponicus alascensis.** Alaska Longspur. Taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 283).

**Passerculus sandwichensis sandwichensis.** Aleutian Savannah Sparrow. Two specimens taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 284). In September, 1913, I found Savannah sparrows rather common in grassy marshes at mouths of streams in the vicinity of Sitka. A specimen of *P. s. sandwichensis* was taken at Silver Bay September 23.

Swarth (1911a, p. 84) took a specimen of this bird at Three-mile Arm, Kuiu Island, May 3, 1909, and three more at Egg Harbor, Coronation Island, May 15, following, but did not find it to the eastward of these points. The 1908 Alexander Expedition did not note the species at all in the Prince William Sound district (Grinnell, 1910, p. 399). From the above facts it would seem (as pointed out by Swarth) that the regular migration route of this bird lies along the extreme western edge of the archipelago.

**Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus.** Western Savannah Sparrow. The breeding Savannah sparrow of the Sitka district has been referred to both *P. s. alaudinus* and *P. s. savanna*. As I did not secure a series of specimens, I am not able to definitely refer them to one form or the other. They seemingly possess some characteristics of each, and a large series of specimens will have to be brought together before their standing can be satisfactorily determined. In view of these facts I have tentatively used the name *alaudinus*, under which the birds of this region are included in the latest A. O. U. Check-List.

Savannah sparrows taken at Sitka by Bischoff and recorded as *P. savanna* (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 283), were later examined by Nelson (1887, p. 187)

and pronounced by him to be "typical examples of *alaudinus*." Two specimens secured by the 1907 Alexander Expedition on Baranof Island, and one from Chichagof Island, are stated by Grinnell to be nearer *savanna* than *alaudinus*. A nest containing five fresh eggs was found by C. Littlejohn at an altitude of about 2600 feet near Hooniah, Chichagof Island, June 25, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 228). I found Savannah sparrows fairly common in summer on grass lands from 2500 to 3500 feet altitude on the mountains of Baranof Island. They were undoubtedly breeding in this locality but no nests were found. A specimen was taken but was very badly shot up and was not preserved. The bill of this specimen was small and the superciliary stripe was whitish, rather than yellowish. For these reasons, at the time, I considered it *alaudinus*.

***Zonotrichia coronata*.** Golden-crowned Sparrow. Abundant migrant. Arrived in the neighborhood of Sitka September 1, and was still present in some numbers a month later, although the height of migration seemed to have passed. It was noted from the shore up to above timber line on the mountains. According to Merrill, the return migration takes place mostly in late April and early May.

***Spizella monticola ochracea*.** Western Tree Sparrow. One specimen taken at Sitka by Bischoff (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 285).

***Junco hyemalis oregonus*.** Oregon Junco. Abundant summer resident, remaining until late in the fall and possibly wintering, though I secured no positive information on the latter point. Breeds from the salt water up to at least 2000 feet around mountain meadows. About August 15 large companies of adults and young appear along the beaches where they feed among the piles of kelp and drift-wood.

***Melospiza melodia rufina*.** Sooty Song Sparrow. This species, originally described from Sitka (Bonaparte, 1850, p. 477), is a common summer visitant in brush and grass lands on islands and along the shore. After the latter part of August, I was unable to find it, all song sparrows observed after that time belonging to the next form. A nest containing four slightly incubated eggs was taken by F. Stephens at Hooniah, Chichagof Island, June 23, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 230).

***Melospiza melodia caurina*.** Yakutat Song Sparrow. Abundant migrant. Appears in the vicinity of Sitka about August 15, and by September 1 is very plentiful. Was still common when I left, in early October. I did not secure any data as to the time of the spring migration.

***Melospiza lincolni gracilis*.** Forbush Sparrow. This bird was first described from Sitka by Kittlitz (1858, p. 199), as *Emberiza gracilis*; therefore I have used the name *gracilis* instead of *striata* which is used in the last A. O. U. Check-List. It is apparently a fairly common summer visitant during some years, and much less plentiful during others. In the summer of 1912 I found it common in the grass around Swan Lake and in marshes at the head of Silver Bay. Young birds just out of the nest were noted in the former locality July 28. During 1913 I visited both of these localities several times but failed to find the species at all, nor did I note it anywhere else in the region. Grinnell (1898, p. 129) took specimens at Swan Lake, June 25, 1896, one of which was a juvenile about one-third grown. During the summer of 1907 the Alexander Expedition noted this bird at Bear Bay, Baranof Island, and at Port Frederick, Idaho Inlet, and Hooniah, Chichagof Island. A nest containing five young was found by Littlejohn in the latter locality June 26 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 231).

***Passerella iliaca townsendi*.** Townsend Fox Sparrow. Common summer

visitant on brush lands. Partial to the smaller grass and brush covered islands like St. Lazaria and Biorka. It was still fairly common when I left, in early October.

*Hirundo erythrogastra*. Barn Swallow. Common summer visitant; most plentiful around towns. The majority of these birds leave for the south about August 15. One or two, however, were noted as late as August 22 (1912).

*Iridoprocne bicolor*. Tree Swallow. Common summer visitant in timbered localities. In late July after the young are out of the nests, they appear along the coast in small flocks, feeding over the surface of the water. They leave mostly about August 1, but one bird was seen as late as August 22 (1912).

*Bombycilla garrula*. Bohemian Waxwing. Merrill has the wings of a specimen taken by him near Sitka, August 27, 1904.

*Vermivora celata lutescens*. Lutescent Warbler. Fairly common summer visitant along clearings and on brush lands at mouths of streams. I noted it near Sitka, at Old Sitka, and at head of Silver Bay. It was seen by Dixon at Port Frederick, Chichagof Island, in late July, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 234).

*Dendroica aestiva rubiginosa*. Alaska Yellow Warbler. Fairly common summer visitant in favorable localities. I noted this species along Indian River, along the stream at Old Sitka, at the head of Silver Bay, and, once, on Kruzof Island.

*Dendroica townsendi*. Townsend Warbler. Adult female taken by Grinnell (1898, p. 129) near Sitka, August 14, 1896, and two others seen at the same time. According to Hartlaub (1883, p. 267), a specimen from Sitka is in the Bremen and Stockholm collection. Male seen by Stephens at Red Bluff Bay, Baranof Island, June, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 235).

*Wilsonia pusilla pileolata*. Pileolated Warbler. Seemingly the commonest of the warblers summering in the region. Particularly plentiful along Indian River, at Old Sitka and at the head of Silver Bay. Also observed on Kruzof and several of the smaller islands. Obtained at Sitka by Bischoff with nest and eggs (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 278—"Myodiectes pusillus").

*Anthus rubescens*. Pipit. Common in summer on grassy slopes of the mountains above timber line, where it undoubtedly breeds. The breeding female taken by Grinnell (1898, p. 129), at Indian River June 10, 1896, had probably straggled down from a nearby mountain to feed. According to Merrill, common along the coast during migrations.

*Cinclus mexicanus unicolor*. Dipper. Fairly common along streams. Noted frequently on Indian River and on streams at head of Silver Bay. Also seen on east side of Baranof Island. Noted by Dixon at Port Frederick, Chichagof Island, July, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 237). Previously recorded from Sitka by Kittlitz and Bischoff.

*Nannus hiemalis pacificus*. Western Winter Wren. Common summer visitant on grass and brush lands. Especially numerous on some of the smaller islands. Was fairly plentiful as late as October 1, but probably does not winter.

*Certhia familiaris occidentalis*. California Creeper. Not very common. Seen occasionally at Indian River and once on Kruzof Island. Several specimens secured by Grinnell (1898, p. 130) in summer of 1896; two scarcely fledged juveniles taken July 2. Previously recorded from Sitka by Kittlitz (1858, p. 212).

*Sitta canadensis*. Red-breasted Nuthatch. A bird of this species was noted by the 1907 Alexander Expedition at Port Frederick, Chichagof Island, the last of July (Grinnell, 1909, p. 238); Shaw (1907, p. 122) mentions hearing the harsh, nasal cry of the nuthatch in the woods back of Sitka.

*Penthestes rufescens rufescens*. Chestnut-backed Chickadee. The most com-

mon land bird of the region. Plentiful in timbered sections from the coast well up into the mountain meadows. Grinnell (1898, p. 130) secured fully fledged young June 26, 1896.

**Regulus satrapa olivaceus.** Western Golden-crowned Kinglet. Rather plentiful in the forests throughout the region. In the latter part of September they were gathered in companies in tree tops near the coast, apparently preparing to migrate.

**Regulus calendula grinnelli.** Sitka Kinglet. Not common. Noted in woods back of Sitka and at head of Silver Bay. Type specimen taken by Grinnell at Sitka in 1896 (Palmer, 1897, p. 399). Two specimens taken at Sitka by Bischoff were recorded as *R. calendula* (Dall & Bannister, 1869, p. 276). On Chichagof Island the species was noted as rare by Dixon at Hooniah, June 21-27, and at Port Frederick, July 25 to August 1 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 239).

**Hylocichla ustulata ustulata.** Russet-backed Thrush. Fairly common summer visitant along streams and on some of the islands. Not noted after August 15. F. Stephens found a nest containing four young ready to fly, at Idaho Inlet, Chichagof Island, July 22, 1907 (Grinnell, 1909, p. 240).

**Hylocichla guttata nanus.** Dwarf Hermit Thrush. Common summer visitant. Especially plentiful on wooded islands. Grinnell (1898, p. 130) obtained young July 2 and found others only half fledged as late as August 15 (1896).

**Planesticus migratorius propinquus.** Western Robin. Common summer visitant. Appears in large flocks along the shores in late July and August after the young are raised. Continues rather plentiful until October. Merrill secured a perfect albino of this species August 12, 1909. Grinnell (1909, p. 241) has given the name *P. m. caurinus* to the robin inhabiting the Sitka district. This form has not been accepted by the A. O. U. Committee.

**Ixoreus naevius naevius.** Varied Thrush. Rather common in the woods from the ocean nearly up to timber line. Particularly plentiful on St. Lazaria and Biorka islands. Grinnell (1898, p. 131) took the first young July 2. Merrill informs me that he has seen this bird throughout the winter.

#### QUESTIONABLE RECORDS

The records of the following species are believed to be erroneous or extremely questionable.

**Aethia pygmaea.**

**Aethia cristatella.** Recorded by Schlegel. These two species might straggle to the vicinity of Sitka but the Schlegel records are unsatisfactory.

**Diomedea albatrus.**

**Puffinus tenuirostris.** Recorded by Schlegel. It is probable that these two birds do occur in the vicinity, but further records seem necessary to establish the fact.

**Phalacrocorax perspicillatus.** Recorded by Schlegel. Occurrence highly improbable.

**Aegialitis meloda.** Recorded by Kittlitz (as *Charadrius melodus*). The bird seen was probably *Ac. semipalmata*.

**Bonasa umbellus sabini.** Recorded by Dall as taken by Bischoff. Occurrence highly improbable. I am informed by Professor Cooke that there is a specimen in the Bischoff collection in the National Museum originally marked from Sitka. Later on (before 1874) this locality was scratched out and New Westminster, B. C., written over it.

**Accipiter cooperi.** Recorded by Grinnell (1898, p. 127). Mr. Grinnell in-

forms me that he now has serious doubts as to the accuracy of his identification of this species at Sitka.

***Parus atricapillus.***

***Hylocichla aliciae.*** Recorded by Dall. Professor Cooke informs me that there are no specimens of either of these two latter forms in the Bischoff collection in the National Museum. Neither are there specimens of any other forms that could have been confounded with them. He considers the publication by Dall of their being taken at Sitka by Bischoff to be a mistake of the writer.

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*Los Angeles, California, January 21, 1914.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Hooded Merganser near Los Angeles.**—A female Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) was taken by Mr. A. E. Jackson at Del Rey, Los Angeles County, on November 27, 1913. The species is of sufficient rarity in southern California to make the record of this capture seem worth while.—W. LEE CHAMBERS, *Los Angeles, California*.

**A New Bird for the Kansas List.**—On April 12, 1913, I secured a female robin near Lawrence, Kansas, which upon examination proves to be *Planesticus m. achrustrus*, a diagnosis confirmed by Mr. H. C. Oberholser. Other specimens have been collected and examined in this same locality in years past. This race seems to be a regular migrant in April, and may perhaps prove to be the breeding form in the southeastern portion of the State. The nearest point at which this bird has been recorded previously is Van Buren, Arkansas (Howell, *Birds of Arkansas*, Bul. 38, Biological Survey, p. 92).—ALEX WETMORE, *Biological Survey, Washington, D. C.*

**California Brown Pelican in British Columbia.**—On July 18, 1913, about 10 A. M., between Alert Bay, Johnson Straits, and Round Island, east entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound, British Columbia, I saw a California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*). The weather had been very warm, dry and clear; but a dense fog that morning had, for safety's sake, necessitated the "Spokane" to lie at anchor at Alert Bay from five to nine A. M. After it cleared and we were under full steam again, we passed a low, narrow sandbar upon which the Pelican stood surrounded by a flock of sea gulls. With my field glasses I had a long and most satisfactory study of him, in his characteristic (profile) pose, with his neck and bill forming an inverted V.—MRS. F. T. BICKNELL, *Los Angeles, California*.

**More Records of the Emperor Goose in California.**—Mr. Vernon Shepherd, a prominent taxidermist of San Francisco, has reported to me that he has known of at least a dozen specimens of the Emperor Goose (*Phalacrocorax canagica*) having been taken in California since 1906. Three of this number he took himself near Dixon, Solano County, California. He has donated to the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology a mounted specimen of a male taken by a market hunter at Colusa, Colusa County, in November, 1912. The specimen was sent to the market in San Francisco and was obtained by Mr. Shepherd from L. Scatena Company.

Mr. Wm. Hackmeier, another taxidermist of San Francisco, has reported the two following records, the first of which was verified by correspondence with the collector.

Male specimen taken November 15, 1913, 10 miles west of Modesto, Stanislaus County, California, by W. D. Toomes. The bird came to the blind alone and was shot. The specimen was mounted by Mr. Hackmeier and is now in the possession of the collector at Modesto.

An individual identified by Mr. Hackmeier as an immature male Emperor Goose was taken near Ingomar, Merced County, California, in December, 1912, by Louis Pfitzer. The bird was not preserved.

The records for Stanislaus and Merced Counties are the first known instances of the occurrence of the Emperor Goose in the San Joaquin Valley. There have been but four previous published records of the occurrence of this goose in California.—H. C. BRYANT, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley*.

**Flight of Swainson Hawks at Pomona, California.**—On April 4 of the present year, while collecting in a small wash just east of here, a boy called my attention to a large blackish hawk perched in the top of a small eucalyptus. It was easily shot and proved to be a *Buteo swainsoni* in melanistic plumage. At the shot several more flew from a near-by grove of tall eucalyptus, and a passing train scared out the remainder of the flock which numbered about thirty birds all told. About half of them flew close past me and showed themselves to be in the same dark plumage as the one taken. Of the birds that remained circling over the grove one certainly was of a much lighter color than the rest; but whether these last were as dark as those seen at close range I am unable to say for certain, though such was apparently the case.—ADRIAAN VAN ROSSEM, *Pomona, California*.

**Egrets in Los Angeles County, California.**—On Thursday, September 2, 1913, about ten o'clock in the morning, while the Audubon Society was enroute to Anaheim Landing on the electric cars, we saw three large Egrets (*Herodias egretta*) in the marsh just back of Alamitos Bay. Feeding not far from these large white herons were several Great Blue Herons. When we returned in the afternoon the birds were nowhere in sight.

About March 17, 1913, I saw one Egret on Wilmington Bay, at low tide. On March 23, 1913, I saw what I supposed to be the same bird, in another part of the same bay.—HARRIET WILLIAMS MYERS, *Los Angeles, California*.

**Two Birds New to Oregon.**—*Arquatella maritima couesi*. Aleutian Sandpiper. While climbing about over the ragged rocks on the Oregon coast about two miles north of Netarts Bay on December 31, 1912, with Mr. O. J. Murie, we flushed a small flock of waders. Mr. Murie fired into the flock killing three birds, one of which proved to be an Aleutian Sandpiper, the other two being Surf-birds (*Aphriza virgata*). While visiting the same locality during March of this year (1913) I kept a careful lookout in all suitable localities and on the 10th was rewarded by seeing two more Aleutian Sandpipers climbing about on an almost perpendicular cliff just above the roaring surf. Both were secured and preserved as specimens.

*Dendroica palmarum palmarum*. Palm Warbler. In September, 1913, while collecting birds in Catlow Valley, Harney County, at the west base of the Steins Mountains, one of these warblers was killed by Harry Telford in the willow thicket in the yard of the Home Creek Ranch. It was feeding in company with Audubon Warblers, which were especially abundant at this locality.—STANLEY G. JEWETT, *Portland, Oregon*.

**Probable Occurrence of the Harris Sparrow in Washington.**—A correspondent, Mrs. Lucy M. Ellis, of North Yakima, Washington, under date of November 27, 1912, reports the recent occurrence of a sparrow whose characters were minutely noted and which could have been none other than an immature Harris (*Zonotrichia querula*.)

On May 14 of this year at almost identically the same spot in the city of North Yakima, Mrs. Ellis saw a Harris Sparrow in full regalia. In view of the reported occurrences of this bird in both California and Oregon, and in view of Mrs. Ellis's careful description, there can be no reasonable doubt of *Z. querula*'s claim to a place in the Washington avifauna.—W. LEON DAWSON, *Santa Barbara, California*.

**Mallard Nesting in Tree.**—On June 2, at Pauline Marsh, Lake County, Oregon, I found a Mallard nest in what I thought an unusual site. It was placed in a deserted crow's nest, some eight feet up in a clump of willow trees, surrounded by the marsh. The nest was lined with down, and contained six well incubated eggs. Before the female returned to the nest, the crows, that with a colony of Black-crowned Night Herons were also nesting in the willows, descended upon the nest and ate one of the eggs. In one patch of tules at this place we found a large number of ducks' eggs, probably 150, that had been destroyed by these crows. In some cases entire nests had been rifled. The Night Herons likewise suffered much from these depredations, but we did not make an estimate of the damage.—ALEXANDER WALKER, *Mulino, Oregon*.

**Accidents to Spotted Sandpipers.**—Of three specimens of *Actitis macularius* taken along the rocky beach south of Redondo, California, on December 7, 1913, one had the last phalanx of middle toe of left foot gone, with claw hanging by a tendon. Another had the right leg gone at the knee, and the third had last phalanx of outer toe of right foot gone with claw. In every case the amputation occurred at a joint, and the wound had healed in a smooth slightly enlarged knob. Can this be the work of the soft-shell "side-step" crabs so abundant among these rocks? One can imagine one of these crabs catching a toe or leg in its big claw, but unable to subdue a struggling bird, which would finally twist off a toe or leg. Has anyone else noticed similar deformities?—J. EUGENE LAW, *Hollywood, California*.

**A New Record for the Pacific Slope of Southern California.**—On December 12, 1912, while hunting through a large weedy field near El Monte, Los Angeles County, I encountered a flock of San Diego Song Sparrows (*Melospiza m. cooperi*) and Lincoln Sparrows (*Melospiza l. lincolni*) which must have numbered over a hundred individuals. Among specimens collected was a Mountain Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia montana*). In order to make doubly sure, Mr. Grinnell and Mr. Swarth most kindly verified the identification. This would seem to constitute a new record for the Pacific slope of southern California.—A. BRAZIER, HOWELL, *Covina, California*.

**Occurrence of the Black-bellied Tree-duck in California.**—In the possession of Mr. Vernon Shepherd, a taxidermist of San Francisco, there is a mounted specimen of a Black-bellied Tree-duck taken in the Imperial Valley, southern California, in the fall of 1912. The specimen was sent with a sack of ducks to the market near the first of the season and was obtained from L. Scatena Company.

I believe this is the first authentic record of the Black-bellied Tree-duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) for California.—H. C. BRYANT, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.*

**The Great Gray Owl in California.**—Up to the present time there have been but two records of *Scotiaptex nebulosa* for California. Newberry (Pac. R. R. Reports, vi, 1857, p. 77) accredits the species rather vaguely to "the Sacramento Valley". Belding (Land Bds. Pac. Dist., 1890, p. 50) knew of a specimen having been killed "in the hills near Chico", Butte County.

On September 26, 1913, a farm hand on the property of Mr. Chas. S. Wheeler, about six miles south of the town of McCloud, in Siskiyou County, California, killed a Great Gray Owl. To be more specific, as I am informed by Mr. Wheeler, the locality is Section 28, Township 39 North, Range 2 West. The bird was sent to a taxidermist in San Francisco where it was mounted, and subsequently presented by Mr. Wheeler to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, where it is catalogued as number 24484 of the ornithological collection. As compared with specimens of *Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa* from Alaska and Canada, I can see no noteworthy peculiarities.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.*

**Nesting of the Gray Flycatcher in Oregon.**—June 7, 1913, I collected a nest and three eggs of the Gray Flycatcher (*Empidonax griseus*) on the juniper flat, at the north of Pauline Mountains, Crook County, Oregon. The parent bird was taken with the nest, and identified by Mr. H. C. Oberholser and Mr. Joseph Grinnell. The eggs were creamy white, and were but slightly incubated. Data reads as follows: Nest composed of small dead weed stems, plant down, hair, shreds of sage-brush bark and some grasses, quilted together and lined with wool and fine feathers. Situated in the crotch of a sage-bush, on a sage and juniper flat. Nest about two feet above the ground. Female bird incubating.—ALEXANDER WALKER, *Mulino, Oregon.*

**Pigmy Owl in San Antonio Canyon, Los Angeles County, California.**—On December 29, 1913, a clear cool day, while hunting squirrels in San Antonio Canyon at an elevation of nearly 4500 feet, near Camp Baldy, I discovered one of these little owls. It was sitting on a bare branch of a sycamore tree and was apparently oblivious to my presence. The specimen was collected and proved to be an adult male *Glaucidium gnoma californicum*, in rather dark plumage. I searched faithfully through the trees near where I found this bird but failed to discover another. This is my first observation of this interesting little fellow, during the fifteen years that I have been about these mountains.—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, *Claremont, California.*

**Unusual Plumage of the Female Linnet.**—On November 2, 1913, being desirous of obtaining specimens of the Linnet (*Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*) in fresh fall plumage, I shot ten birds at random out of two flocks, near Garnsey, Los Angeles County, California. Three were males and seven females. Of the seven in the streaked, female plumage, two show some red markings on throat, breast and rump. The natural assumption was that these were older birds than the others, acquiring in their maturity a trace of the brilliant plumage of the male, but dissection showed that though they were unquestionably females, they were, from the soft condition of the skulls, undoubtedly birds in first winter plumage, hatched some time during the previous spring or summer. Two fully adult females in the same series, birds of the previous year or older, show not a trace of red. I do not recall seeing in any of the published descriptions of the species mention of the occasional appearance of even a few red feathers in the female Linnet, nor have I ever before observed this condition in specimens handled.—H. S. SWARTH, *Museum of History Science and Art, Los Angeles, California.*

**The Undying Error.**—No more typical example of the persistence of error could be selected than that furnished by the publication and subsequent citation of the alleged nesting of the Black Cloud Swift (*Cypseloides niger borealis*) at Seattle. An ardent amateur, Mr. Matt H. Gormley, a member of a now defunct organization then known as "The Young Naturalists", found a bulky nest containing five white eggs in a warehouse on the Seattle waterfront, and reported it, with due pomp and circumstantiality, as the nest of the long-sought Black Swift. Appearing as it did in the venerated columns of the *Auk* (vol. v, 1888, pp. 424-425), the report met with ready acceptance and was copied far and wide.

Of course those whose natures are tinged with a wholesome skepticism soon made out that the nest in question belonged, not to the dashing tyrant of the skies, but to the more prosaic Purple Martin (*Progne subis*). So far as its author was concerned the mistake, albeit somewhat jejune, was a not altogether unnatural one, because the Martin as a resident of Washington was then very little known. Mr. Gormley at length discovered his own error and was so bored by it, and by the chaffing to which it subjected him, that the subject became tabu among his friends; but so far as known to the writer, he never took the trouble to make a public correction.

Major Bendire correctly diagnosed the case, upon a visit to Seattle in May, 1894, and published his opinion in the authoritative "Life Histories" (vol. II, 1895, p. 177). Yet here we have it in Mrs. Bailey's "Handbook of Birds of the Western United States" (Second Edition, Revised, 1904, p. 229): "Nest.—On cliffs or about buildings. One described by M. H. Gormley on the cornice of a building made of straws, chips, and horsehair, lined with green leaves and paper. Eggs: 5, white." Davie admits the record to his "Nests and Eggs of North American Birds", 3rd and 4th editions, but throws it out of the final 5th edition. Coues avoids the trap, as also does Reed in "North American Birds' Eggs"; but *miserabile dictu!* we find this in Ridgway's masterpiece ("Birds of North and Middle America", Part v, p. 703), under the generic heading *Nephoecetes*: "Nidification.—Nest in recesses among rocks or about buildings, composed of straw, feathers, leaves, bits of paper, etc., loosely put together and not held together by salivary secretion"—the pitiful undying error of the Gormley tradition!

One even suspects that this ancient virus has poisoned so classical a fount as the Cambridge Natural History. In Volume IX, "Birds", by A. H. Evans, page 423, we find the following (abridged) paragraph: "In *Cypseloides* \* \* \* *C. niger* of North America \* \* \* *C. rutilus* and *C. brunneitorques*. The genus ranges to Peru and Brazil. The nest, placed in holes in houses and so forth, is made of straw, leaves and rubbish; the eggs are four or five". But Ridgway expressly says of *Cypseloides* (from which he has separated our Black Swift under the name *Nephoecetes*): "Nest of *C. brunneitorques* composed of moss, shallow and compact, placed in dark culverts, near water (probably in rocky banks or cliffs also." No; the animus of the Evans paragraph is Gormley (*op. cit. ad. naus.*). We shall never see the last of it!—WILLIAM LEON DAWSON, Santa Barbara, California.

**Albino Anatids.**—In the store of Mr. Wm. Hackmeier, a well-known taxidermist of San Francisco, there is on exhibition a mounted specimen of a female albino White-fronted Goose. The specimen was sent in by a market hunter who killed it near Colusa, Colusa County, California, February 26, 1911. The general color is creamy white shading to light buff on the scapulars and primaries. The scapulars are light buff edged with creamy white. Two conspicuous characters help in identifying this specimen as belonging to the species *Anser albifrons gambeli*. One is the white area at the base of the bill, which, although not contrasting with the cream color of the head, is yet easily distinguishable. The other is the presence of five dusky brown feathers on the breast which give it the characteristic "speckle-belly" appearance. The specimen is in worn plumage. Mr. Hackmeier reports the bill as being "flesh color" and the feet as "pink". Measurements: Folded wing 39 millimeters; bill along culmen 43; tarsus 70.

A female albino Mallard Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*) was recently presented to the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology by Mr. George Thompson of Gridley, Butte County, California. The bird was shot by Mr. Thompson along with other ducks near Gridley on January 7, 1914. The entire plumage of the bird is white except for light brownish centers to some of the feathers of the breast, abdomen, and back of neck, and for brownish feathers on top of the head. According to Ridgway's *Color Standards* (1912), the bill is capucine-orange and the feet salmon-orange. Measurements are as follows: Total length 556 millimeters; folded wing 279; bill along culmen 53; tarsus 46.—H. C. BRYANT, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, University of California, Berkeley.

# THE CONDOR

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Western Ornithology

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## EDITORIAL NOTES AND NEWS

The Business Managers of the Cooper Club, Messrs. Chambers and Law, have submitted to the two Divisions their financial statement for the year 1913. This statement includes itemized receipts and expenditures on both *Avifauna* and *Condor* accounts, an inventory of Cooper Club property, and a final appeal for continued and increased support on the part of all interested in the growth of western ornithology. The following abbreviation from this report will give an idea of the amount of work which now devolves upon our Business Managers, but which is essential to handling the Club's publications as they are now appearing.

Balance in Bank January 2, 1913.....	\$ 181.54
Dues received during 1913.....	844.09
Subscriptions during 1913.....	224.36
Advertisements.....	46.00
Donations.....	238.69
Sale of <i>Avifaunas</i> .....	52.75
Sale of back <i>Condors</i> .....	83.01

Total Receipts.....\$1670.44

Printing of <i>Condor</i> .....	\$ 646.25
Engraver's bill.....	133.14
Northern Division expenses.....	21.75
Southern Division expenses.....	27.98
On account conservation of game....	37.03
Postage.....	84.55
Purchase of back <i>Condors</i> .....	11.50
On <i>Avifauna</i> account.....	12.56
Sundry expenses.....	47.32

Total Expenditures.....\$1022.08

Balance on hand, January 2, 1914....\$ 648.36

From this deduct \$291.44, in *Avifauna* account, which leaves \$356.92; then add \$105.35 for 1912 bills paid during 1913, making \$462.27, the total amount in *Condor* fund. From this deduct the amount of advance dues and subscriptions (\$96.10), and 1913 bills payable (\$278.69), and there is left a net balance, or "profit" on the *Condor*, of \$87.48.

The printing of volume XV of the *Condor* cost \$60.73 more than volume XIV, while \$3.68 less was spent upon cuts. An edition of 1000 copies of each issue of the *Condor* was printed. *Avifauna* number 10, Swarth's "Distributional List of Arizona Birds", is now in press.

## COMMUNICATION

### REVIEWS AND JUST CRITICISM

#### Editor THE CONDOR:

I am a far-off, perhaps unheard of—so to speak—member of the Cooper Club; but it is my Club, and to me it means more than any of the other organizations of its kind of which I am a member—all because eight of the best years of my life were spent in the Land of the Golden West. Just what my rights as a member of the Cooper Club may be to criticize the reviews in its *Organ*, *THE CONDOR*, I do not stop to ask; but as a member of Society, in general, and especially as a member of that small portion of supposed Goodfellows, banded together under the name of Nature Students, I have the moral right to ask regarding that which, to me, seems undesirable, and, especially so, when that same is printed matter which goes forth to the world and becomes a living record.

Does that portion of the review regarding Bruce Horsfall's plate of the Catbird, signed W. L. D., page 236, volume 15, November issue of *THE CONDOR*, sound like brotherly love? Has it any of that milk of human kindness, as such, making *THE CONDOR* a medium of good fellowship?

I know neither Mr. Horsfall nor W. L. D., only as they have come on record in print; but even if all that is said be true, could it not have been said in a kind way? Why not a plain, honest statement, even though cruel in its frankness, instead of a flippant thrust carrying with it a personal tang? Why could it not have been a good clean review, such as the one given of *The Birds of Virginia*? For that was, indeed, most necessary and just.

There is no stimulus to my life's work like study and communion with nature. From the fundamentals to the last integral parts of design, my profession is a logical sequence along lines of evolution, based on the primal laws of creation. With this knowledge, I have learned to feel that all who turn to nature seriously, do, of necessity, set themselves apart from the proletariat, are bigger and better in thought, more susceptible of sympathy, no matter what their walk in life. Then, if so, is Mr. Horsfall one to be encouraged in the right way, by



a clean hand of criticism and good fellowship stretched across the intervening States?

*Humanum est errare.*

With sincerity and honesty of purpose, I remain,

Most respectfully,

A. O. TREGANZA.

Salt Lake City, Utah, January, 7, 1914.

#### PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

THE BIRDS OF CONNECTICUT. By JOHN HALL SAGE and LOUIS BENNETT BISHOP, assisted by WALTER PARKS BLISS. [= State of Connecticut, Public Document No. 47. State Geological and Natural History Survey Bulletin No. 20. 1913. Pp. 1-370.]

The authors' names are sufficient assurance of the general excellence of this, the latest state list of birds to make its appearance. Under each species is uniformly careful and methodical entry of data pertaining to the various phases of the subject here considered, a general statement of the status of the bird within the state, followed by migration dates, particulars of nesting sites and dates, unusual records, and such additional comments as seem to be called for. About half the book is taken up by the introduction and the body of the list. The remainder of the volume is occupied by various appendices to part one—a catalogue of introduced species and those of doubtful standing, a statistical summary, list of observers, and bibliography—and by part two, a treatise on the economic ornithology of the region, compiled by Dr. Bishop.

A summary of the list gives a total of 334 species for the state, divided as follows: residents, 80, summer residents, 78, winter residents, 38, transient visitors, 124, accidental visitors, 89. The long list of accidentals, second only to the transients in numbers, is probably one result of the host of observers enlisted in furtherance of the work, the catalogue of whose names occupies nearly four pages.

The portion of the report treating of the economic aspect of the subject is largely a judicious compilation of data pertaining to species occurring in Connecticut, and is undoubtedly an accurate portrayal of the relations of these birds to their surroundings. In fact the whole book strikes one as an eminently "solid" and dependable piece of work. The authors' attitude toward questionable records, well illustrated in the introduction in their protest against the acceptance of "operaglass" records of rare or unusual species, as well as in other matters, would be calculated to inspire confidence in their statements, even without a knowledge of their previous years of brilliant accomplishment in the field of ornithology.—H. S. SWARTH.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BIRDS AND MAMMALS OF THE SAN JACINTO AREA OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, WITH REMARKS UPON THE BEHAVIOR OF GEOGRAPHIC RACES ON THE MARGINS OF THEIR HABITATS. By J. GRINNELL and H. S. SWARTH (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool., vol. 10, October 31, 1913, pp. 197-406, pls. 6-10, 3 text figs.).

In this comprehensive paper of 210 pages, are clearly set forth the results of a summer's reconnaissance in and about the San Jacinto Mountains, undertaken in 1908 by the newly organized staff of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. The report embodies the work of two field parties, each of several members, the one which was headed by the authors maintained from the 18th of May to the 5th of September; and the other, under Messrs. Taylor and Richardson, from the 1st of May till July 12th. Both because of the wide experience of the leaders and the industry of their helpers, a large amount of museum material (including 1533 bird skins) was secured, and a fairly exhaustive survey was made of this interesting and topographically well-defined area. The report itself is notable as a piece of scholarly workmanship; and so far as method, accuracy, and lucidity are concerned, is unquestionably a model of its kind.

After a careful description of localities or base camps, and a brief exposition of the ecological elements involved, there appears a check-list of 169 species of birds encountered in the course of the season, followed by a carefully annotated account of the birds themselves. While each account aims primarily to summarize the status of the species from a taxonomic and ecological view point, a gratifying amount of biographical material is introduced, and our demand to know the most possible about the lesser known is commendably satisfied. Thus, we have, quite appropriately, a mere half-page devoted to the well-known Audubon Warbler, as against six pages given to the Gray Vireo, a bird about which we are still very curious.

In like manner also, the mammals, of 63 forms, are listed and described.

From a taxonomic standpoint this paper gives much ground for satisfaction, and leaves little to be desired. To our distinct relief there are no new forms described, not even a sub-species. Better than that, the abundant material secured enables the authors definitely to discredit, at least as birds of California, several alleged varieties which have hitherto cumbered our check-lists: *Oreortyx picta confinis*, *Aphelocoma californica obscura*, *Vireo vicinior californicus*, and *Sialia mexicana anabelae*. Most astonishing of all, the Gray Flycatcher, *Empidonax griseus*, which used to bulk so large in south-

ern California (as a producer of much desired and expensive eggs), and which filled four pages of Mr. Grinnell's San Bernardino report, has dwindled to a mere mention of four nondescripts caught during migration. "The collection includes four small flycatchers taken near Cabezon at the northern base of the mountains which we have, with some hesitation, placed in a different category from the breeding *E. wrighti* of the higher elevations". *E. wrighti*, on the basis of 36 specimens, is conceded to be the breeding bird of the San Jacinto Mountains. "Apparently nothing is known of the nesting habits of *E. griseus*, the published breeding ranges being mere general statements with no precise data to support them." There be those of us who know what a pang this acknowledgment costs the authors of the San Jacinto report, and precisely on this account we honor their scholarly integrity,—an integrity which depends first of all upon a willingness to face the facts.

We have here renewed evidence of able, trustworthy leadership, and we are prepared to give, henceforth, an even more implicit obedience to Grinnell and Swarth's taxonomic decrees.

Several interesting cases of overlapping or interpenetrating faunæ are brought to light; thus, Cactus Woodpecker, *Dryobates scalaris cactophilus*, a characteristic Colorado Desert form, is discovered at Valle Vista at the Pacific base of the mountains. While the Desert Quail (*Lophortyx gambeli*) halts circumspectly at the edge of the desert, the Valley Quail (*L. californica vallicola*) spills out of its chaparral and mingles freely with its congeners. In general, the San Diegan Pacific species are more presuming than their kinsfolk; for the Anthony Towhee, *P. crissalis senicula*, overlaps *P. aberti*, and *P. m. megalonyx*, an Upper Sonoran species, coquettes with the open places. The most notable example of all, however, is furnished by the San Diego Song Sparrow, *Melospiza m. cooperi*, which Messrs. Grinnell and Swarth found firmly established amid desert surroundings (albeit with local riparian associations) in lower Palm Canyon. These and similar occurrences among the mammals lead the authors to philosophize upon "The Behavior of Geographic Races on the Margins of their Habitats". The conclusions reached are sound ones, and present fascinating vistas of suggestion, but their adequate consideration is beyond our present space.

An excellent table of comparisons between the boreal faunæ of San Jacinto Peak and related mountain masses to the northward is presented and certain conclusions reached which are stated in the form of laws. It will

be, perhaps, of as great interest to those who do not have access to this paper, to compare the San Jacinto area broadly with the San Bernardino Mountain district, already so carefully studied by Mr. Grinnell\*. The present paper reports 169 species as against 139 for the San Bernardino area. Of these, 42 were not found at all in the San Bernardino Mountains; but when we have eliminated migrants, casuals, and species common to the desert base of both ranges, as well as those which, through lack of opportunity or completeness of observation, rather than by reason of actual difference in geographical range, were not reported from the San Bernardino Range, we find only two species, *Vireo vicinior* and *Polioptila californica*, which do not venture north of the San Jacintos.

On the other hand, although the San Bernardino list contains only 12 names which do not appear in the present list, 7 of these are significant as being those of species not known to breed as far south as the San Jacinto Range. They are: *Otus flammeolus*, *Chordeiles virginianus hesperis*, *Amphispiza nevadensis canescens*, *Hylocichla guttata sequoiensis*, *Planesticus migratorius propinquus*, *Sialia currucoides*, and *Myadestes townsendi*. It is notable that four of these should be Upper Transition and Boreal Turdines, which thus find on the flanks of "Grayback", San Jacinto's elder and more favored brother, their southernmost Pacific breeding station. It is not impossible that the Townsend Solitaire may yet be found on San Jacinto, but the remaining three are certainly absent.

This San Jacinto bird-book, as it deserves to be called, is a mine of information for the bird student, from whatever angle it is viewed. It is so good, that one who loves birds better than he does bird-skins cannot help wishing that half as many bird-skins might have served these insatiable scientists, so that there would have been time left to observe and to record more life-histories. It is not enough to say, "Let others do that", for there are not in the West two other more gifted observers of birds than Messrs. Swarth and Grinnell. Of Mr. Grinnell, especially, I cannot forbear to say that some of his recent biographical sketches evince a keenness of insight, and bring out a wealth of firsthand information which mark him as potentially the foremost biographer of Western birds. We learn from this volume that the authors took seventeen "specimens" of the Gray Vireo; yet I submit that the six-page biography is worth sixteen of them. Twenty-six specimens of the Black-chinned Sparrow

\* "The Biota of the San Bernardino Mountains", by Joseph Grinnell (Univ. Calif. Publ. Zool. vol. 5, December 31, 1908, pp. 1-170, pls. 1-24).

will be eventually consulted by two or three specialists, but a four-page biography in place of two might have gladdened twenty-six hundred readers. Sixty specimens of the Sierra Junco! Is human life (not to mention bird life) worth so little?

In like manner, we should have been delighted with a fuller series of photographs to illustrate the constant references to "associations" and botanical as well as topographical features, if these ardent mummifiers of 37 Costa Hummers and 38 Audubon Warblers and 51 Western Bluebirds could have spared the time from these mortuary rites. The half dozen photographs which are shown are excellently chosen, and greatly enhance the interest of the text, as do the map and price diagram.

Of minor criticisms none offer which reflect in any degree upon the accuracy or wholesomeness or scientific worth of this finished contribution to knowledge. The reviewer deprecates the use of lower case letters for the vernacular names of birds, as being not only ungrammatical and vague, but ill-proportioned and offensive to the eye. Witness this from page 292: "The warbling, Cassin and Hutton vireos are arboreal foragers"; or this cryptogram: "but the least is riparian, while the gray is distinctly a dry-slope forager". Also the reviewer is of those who resent the attempted change of the long-established and logical term "summer resident" in favor of "summer visitant". If a bird does not reside where she rears her young, then she has no home or country. Am I only a "winter visitant" at Santa Barbara, because I spend four months at home and eight, or thereabouts, afield? The State holds otherwise and so does common sense. *Aber hoch der San Jacinto Report!*—W. L. DAWSON.

## MINUTES OF COOPER CLUB MEETINGS

### SOUTHERN DIVISION

DECEMBER.—The regular meeting of the Southern Division of the Club was held at the Museum of History, Science, and Art, Thursday evening, December 18, 1913, with President Law in the chair. Those present were Messrs. Brown, Chambers, Daggett, Grey, Law, Miller, Morcom, Rich, Swarth, Willett, Wood, and Wyman. Fordyce Grinnell, Jr., was a visitor. The minutes of the November meeting were read and approved, followed by the reading of the Northern Division November minutes. New members were elected as follows: F. R. Decker, Pross-

er, Washington; G. H. Lings, Nyack, New York; Edwin S. Parker, Berkeley; P. C. Dutton, Stone Staffs, England. One new name was proposed: Finlay Simmons, Houston, Texas, presented by W. Lee Chambers. The election of new members by the Northern Division, as given in the minutes of the November meeting, was ratified by vote of this division.

The action of the Northern Division in regard to questions arisen in connection with the Pacific Association of Scientific Societies, was approved, as it was evident that the Southern Division would be unable to participate in a meeting held at Seattle. The dues of the Club to the Association were ordered paid.

Nominations for officers of the Division for 1914 were now in order. The present incumbents (President, J. Eugene Law; Vice-president, Howard Robertson; Secretary, H. S. Swarth) were placed in nomination by F. S. Daggett, seconded by L. E. Wyman. After some discussion the nominations were declared closed.

Mr. F. Grinnell showed some photographs of California naturalists, including a likeness of one of the Club's honorary members, Lyman Belding, taken in 1882, at a time when he was doing much active bird work within the state. Mr. Miller exhibited a skin of the Slender-billed Shearwater (*Puffinus tenuirostris*) recently taken by himself at Hyperion Beach, Los Angeles County, the second record for southern California. Adjourned.—H. S. SWARTH, Secretary.

JANUARY.—The January meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Museum of History, Science and Art, Thursday evening, January 29, 1914, with President Law in the chair, and the following members present. Mrs. E. H. Husher, and Messrs. Blain, Chambers, Daggett, Dial, Edwards, Eggleston, Esterly, Grey, Judson, Law, Layne, Morcom, Rich, Robertson, Snyder, Swarth, Wood, and Wymian. Visitors in attendance were Mrs. Minerva J. Fargo, and Miss Wood.

The Southern Division minutes for December were read and approved, followed by the Northern Division minutes for the December and January meetings. One new member was elected, Mr. Finlay Simmons, of Houston, Texas. New names proposed were: Mrs. Minerva J. Fargo, of Los Angeles, and Miss Ada Wilson, of Pasadena, presented by Mrs. E. H. Husher; C. G. Stivers, of Los Angeles, and L. R. Reynolds, of San Francisco, by J. Grinnell; Miss Helen Powell, Berkeley, by W. F. Bade; Miss Etta V. Little, Los Angeles, by H. C. Bryant; Luther Little, Los

Angeles, by M. W. Blain. Resignations were read and accepted, of E. Boyer, A. G. Ulrich, F. O. Pilsbury, and C. W. Bowles.

Election of officers of the Division for 1914 gave the following results: President, J. Eugene Law; Vice-president, Howard Robertson; Secretary, H. S. Swarth. A communication from Mr. W. L. Dawson, tendering his services to the Club for a lantern slide lecture some time in February, was received with the greatest enthusiasm, and the secretary was instructed to make the necessary arrangements. Members of the Audubon Society who were present suggested that it be made a joint affair of the two societies, and it was so ordered.

A letter was read, written by Joseph Dixon and addressed to Mr. Grinnell, containing an intensely interesting account of the vicissitudes of his party in Arctic Alaska before their final safe installation in winter quarters. The letter was brought overland by certain members of the expedition, and took over three months in reaching its destination.

Mrs. Husher announced that in future the Los Angeles Audubon Society would hold its meetings the third Thursday of each month, the place of meeting being the Hotel Clark, on Hill Street, between Fifth and Sixth. Meetings will be held at 3 p. m. Mr. George Wood spoke briefly of certain game and other animals of northern Arizona, as observed by him in the mountains near Kingman and Prescott.

Although a mishap to the lighting system of the portion of the city in which the Museum is situated forced the meeting to be held "by yellow candle light", the only curtailment of the program was the forced omission of the inspection of the Museum building and exhibits, with which the meetings usually close. Adjourned.—H. S. SWARTH, *Secretary*.

#### NORTHERN DIVISION

DECEMBER.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, Thursday evening, December 18, 1913. President Carriger was in the chair with the following members present: Mesdames Allen and Grinnell, Miss Swezy, and Messrs. Bryant, Camp, Grinnell, Heinemann, Lastreto, Parker, Ray, Shelton, and Storer. Miss Gertrude Goldsmith and Messrs. F. Martens and Otto Plath were present as visitors. The Northern Division minutes for November were read and approved followed by the reading of the Southern Division minutes for November.

Miss Powell and Messrs. Pope, Reynolds, and Stover were elected to membership. The following were nominated for membership; from the Northern Division: Miss Etta V. Little, 229 S. Los Angeles St., Los Angeles, California, proposed by H. C. Bryant; from the Southern Division: F. R. Decker, Prosser, Washington, and G. H. Lings, Nyack, New York, both proposed by W. Lee Chambers. The resignation of Mr. Charles W. Bowles was accepted.

A communication from Mr. A. L. Cowell of the Bureau of Conventions and Societies of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition was read, expressing interest in the action of the Club toward promoting a Conservation Congress.

Nominations of officers for the Northern Division in 1914 were as follows: President, Harold C. Bryant; Vice-President, Chase Littlejohn; Secretary, Tracy I. Storer.

Mr. Alfred Shelton presented the paper of the evening, entitled, "Birds of the Northwestern Coast Counties of California". Mr. Shelton was a member of an expedition sent out by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology through the region mentioned, during the past summer and paid particular attention to the birds. In the paper Mr. Shelton first gave brief descriptions of the localities visited by the party, and then some of the interesting records and observations were related. Adjourned.—TRACY I. STORER, *Secretary*.

JANUARY.—The regular monthly meeting of the Northern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club was held at the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, Thursday evening, January 15, 1914, at 8 o'clock. Vice-President Bryant was in the chair with the following members present: Mrs. Grinnell, Messrs. Grinnell, Parker, Rankin, Shelton, Silliman, and Storer. Miss Goldsmith and Messrs. Lee R. Dice and Arthur Folger were present as visitors. The minutes of the Northern Division for December, 1913, were read and approved followed by the reading of the minutes of the Southern Division for the same month.

It was moved, seconded, and carried that the Secretary cast the unanimous ballot of those present electing those nominated at the December meeting as the officers for the current year. Miss Etta V. Little and Messrs. F. R. Decker and G. H. Lings were elected to membership. The application of Mr. Finlay Simmons, Houston, Texas, proposed by W. Lee Chambers was read.

Mr. A. C. Chandler delivered the paper of the evening, his subject being, "Some interesting facts about feathers." Adjourned.—TRACY I. STORER, *Secretary*.

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**For Sale, Exchange and Want Column.**—In this space members of the Cooper Club are allowed one notice in each issue free of charge. Books and magazines can be offered for sale or exchange; bird skins and eggs can be offered in exchange, but *not for sale*. Notices must be written plainly, on one side only of a clean sheet of paper. For this department address W. LEE CHAMBERS, *Eagle Rock, Los Angeles County, California.*

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Announcement is made of a plan for the cooperative study of bird migration.

The birds figured in color are the Redpoll, Hoary Redpoll, Purple Finch and Wood Thrush.

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